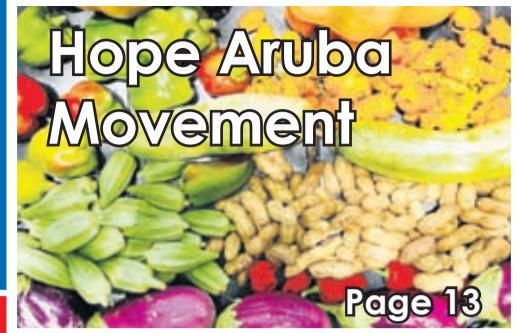


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SCOLDING STONE



Judge imposes gag order on Trump confidant Stone after post

Former campaign adviser for President Donald Trump, Roger Stone accompanied by his wife Nydia Stone, left, arrives at federal court in Washington, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

Associated Press

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Sanctions could ease with greatly reduced North Korea threat

By DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will not move to ease economic sanctions on North Korea until it is confident that the nuclear weapons threat from Pyongyang has been "substantially reduced," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday.

Pompeo didn't elaborate, but his comment seemed to leave open the possibility that sanctions relief was possible short of complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Pompeo told NBC's "Today" that he hopes North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will make good on his pledge to give up his nuclear weapons during his second meeting with President Donald Trump next week in Vietnam.

But a senior administration official said the U.S. is still not sure if North Korea has decided to give up its nuclear weapons. Asked if North Korea was negotiating in good faith, the official said the nations are in a



In this Jan. 25, 2019 photo, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo talks at the State Department in Washington. In this Jan. 25, 2019 photo, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo talks at the State Department in Washington.

genuine negotiation, and it will take time to "tease out" exactly what is Kim's full commitment.

The official, who is familiar with the talks and spoke only on condition of anonymity, also said that reducing the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea has not been a topic of the talks.

There has been discussion, however, about using the summit as a venue to declare the end of the Kore-

an War — something that Kim has sought. The fighting ended with an armistice in July 1953. That armistice has yet to be replaced with a peace treaty, leaving the peninsula in a technical state of war.

Pompeo said he didn't want to get into the details about what either side was willing to offer to make progress in the talks.

"The American people should know we have the toughest economic sanc-

tions that have ever been placed on North Korea and we won't release that pressure until such time as we're confident we've substantially reduced that risk," Pompeo said, adding that he hopes the two leaders will take a "truly historic step forward" at their meeting in Hanoi.

Asked if the U.S. was willing to compromise on its goal of complete, verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Pompeo said: "To keep the American people safe, we have to reduce the threat from a nuclear-armed North Korea and then, in turn, we can work on peace and security on the peninsula and a brighter future for the North Korean people."

Some lawmakers and North Korea experts worry that Trump will grant too many concessions to Kim without making him honor his pledge to give up his nuclear weapons.

They note that Kim still has a stockpile of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles and the ability to produce

the uranium or plutonium needed to make more. Kim has not yet signed any deal to denuclearize his nation, and commercial satellite images indicate that he's actually moving forward with his program.

"There are ample reasons to be skeptical that Chairman Kim is committed to a nuclear-free North Korea" the Democratic chairmen of the House Armed Services, Intelligence and Foreign Affairs committees wrote in a letter to Trump on Thursday. Reps. Adam Smith of Washington, Adam Schiff of California and Eliot Engel of New York, respectively, accused the White House of cutting off congressional access to intelligence about North Korea's weapons and withholding information about the talks from Congress.

"A summit that amounts to little more than spectacle will further erode the public confidence and the credibility of the United States, an outcome that we all wish to avoid," they wrote. □

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Judge imposes gag order on Trump confidant Stone after post

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge issued a broad gag order forbidding Roger Stone to discuss his criminal case with anyone and gave him a stinging reprimand Thursday over the longtime

Trump confidant's posting of a photo of the judge with what appeared to be crosshairs of a gun.

She promised to throw him behind bars if he violates the court order in any way. U.S. District Judge Amy Ber-

man Jackson said that it would be "foolhardy" for her not to take any action over the Instagram post and that Stone would "pose a danger" to others in the case if the conditions of his release weren't modified to include a gag order. "Roger Stone fully understands the power of words and the power of symbols and there's nothing ambiguous about crosshairs," the judge said. "How hard was it to come up with a photo that didn't have a crosshairs in the corner?" she quipped at one point.

Stone has pleaded not guilty to charges he lied to Congress, engaged in witness tampering and obstructed a congressional investigation into possible coordination between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. The charges stem from conversations he had during the campaign about WikiLeaks, the anti-secrecy group that released material stolen from Democratic groups, including Hillary Clinton's campaign.

The political operative and self-described dirty trickster is the sixth Trump aide or adviser charged in special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation. He was arrested last month and has remained free on a \$250,000 personal recognizance bond. Stone has maintained his innocence and blasted the special counsel's investigation as politically motivated.

During Thursday's tense and animated hearing in federal court in Washington, Stone took the witness

stand to try to explain his Instagram post and apologize to the judge, repeatedly telling her he had made an egregious and inexcusable mistake.

"Thank you, but the apology rings quite hollow," she shot back before instituting the gag order.

The judge said she doubted Stone had learned his lesson and it was clear he needed "clear boundaries" about what he can and can't say to prevent potential jurors from being prejudiced.

She said she was not reassured by "the defense suggestion that Mr. Stone is all talk and no action and this is all a big mistake." "No, Mr. Stone, I am not giving you another chance," she said. The 66-year-old Stone said the image had been selected by a volunteer who was working for him, though he couldn't say who picked the photo or list the five or six volunteers who have been working for him when he was asked by prosecutors.

He said he had several photos to choose from and posted the image himself to his profile.

"You had a choice?" the judge interjected.

Stone said he picked the photo "randomly," a suggestion the judge almost immediately dismissed.

"It was an egregious mistake. I obviously wish I could do it over again, but I cannot," Stone said. "I recognize I let the court down, I let you down, I let myself down. ... It was a momentary lapse in judgment."

He has said the photo was "misinterpreted," the symbol was actually the Celtic cross, not crosshairs of a gun, and he was not trying to threaten the judge.

Last week, Judge Jackson had implemented a limited order that prevented Stone from discussing his case near the courthouse and generally prohibited his lawyers, prosecutors and witnesses from making public comments that could "pose a substantial likelihood" of prejudicing potential jurors. But that order stopped short of impos-

ing a broad ban on public comments, as Thursday's order does.

After Stone posted and then deleted the photo on Instagram, the judge ordered him to return to Washington and appear in court for Thursday's hearing. He and his lawyers filed a notice with the court that said they recognized the photo was "improper and should not have been posted."

Stone's lawyers argued, unsuccessfully, that placing any limits on his public comments would infringe on his constitutionally protected right to free speech. His attorney, Bruce Rogow, said Stone's post was inexcusable but argued his client should have another



Former campaign adviser for President Donald Trump, Roger Stone, leaves federal court Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019, in Washington.

Associated Press

chance to comply with the judge's initial gag order.

Special counsel Mueller's team has been dwindling in recent weeks and lawyers from the U.S. attorney's

office in Washington were assigned to Stone's case from the beginning, which could be an indication that Mueller is planning to hand off the investigation. □

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Wisconsin Democrats file fourth lawsuit against lame-duck law

By TODD RICHMOND
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Wisconsin Democratic Party filed a lawsuit Thursday alleging a lame-duck law Republicans passed to limit Gov. Tony Evers' powers is meant to retaliate against his supporters in violation of the U.S. Constitution. The party filed the lawsuit in federal court in Madison. The action is the fourth legal challenge to the lame-duck measure since former Republican Gov. Scott Walker signed it into law in December, including a union lawsuit that Evers joined.

"(The law) was bald-faced undermining of the incoming administration," the Democratic Party's chairwoman, Martha Laning, told reporters on a conference call. "The will of the people is the law of the land and it's about time Republicans start respecting that."

Assembly Republican

Speaker Robin Vos said during a luncheon in Madison that he wasn't surprised Democrats were filing another lawsuit challenging the law.

"I am confident when a court, a fair court, has an opportunity to look at it we are going to win," Vos said. Republican lawmakers passed the law in a messy all-night session in December. The measure prohibits Evers from ordering Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul to withdraw Wisconsin from lawsuits without legislative permission, a move designed to ensure Evers can't yank the state out of a multistate lawsuit challenging the Affordable Care Act.

The law also prohibits Kaul from settling lawsuits without legislative approval and shifts money won in settlements from Kaul's office to the state's general fund. It also allows legislators to intervene in cases using their own attorneys,



In this Jan. 22, 2019, file photo Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers addresses a joint session of the Legislature in the Assembly chambers during the Governor's State of the State speech at the state Capitol in Madison, Wis.

Associated Press

unshackling GOP lawmakers from any Kaul stances they don't approve. Other provisions limit the window for early in-person voting and require state agencies to take down publications explaining state law by July unless they send all the documents through a new process that includes a public comment period. The new lawsuit names Democratic campaign

workers as well as a voter who supported Evers and Kaul as plaintiffs. The filing names as defendants a host of GOP lawmakers, including Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, as well Evers and Kaul. The lawsuit alleges the lame-duck law violates the U.S. Constitution's free speech and equal protection guarantees. The statutes amount to retaliation against the Democratic workers and voters for their political viewpoint, eliminating their ability to enact policies they support through Evers and Kaul and diluting their votes, the filing argues.

"(The law's) discriminatory terms and application serve no compelling, content-neutral government interest," the lawsuit said. Five labor unions, including the Service Employees International Union, and a group of liberal-leaning organizations led by the League of Women Voters filed separate lawsuits challenging the law in state court last month.

The unions argue that the law steals power from the executive branch and transfers it to the Legislature in violation of the separation of powers doctrine. They also contend that state agencies won't be able to update their guidance documents by July 1, resulting in tens of thousands of publications explaining everything from

how the Division of Motor Vehicles works to forms laying out child support eligibility. The liberal groups allege the Legislature improperly convened to pass the law.

Evers and Kaul are named as defendants in each of those lawsuits. Evers on Wednesday filed an affidavit in the union lawsuit saying he agrees with their position and calling the law a "transparent and rushed attempt to stymie the incoming administration." The governor hasn't taken a position yet on the liberal groups' lawsuit.

Kaul has declined to defend the state in both lawsuits. He says his office has a substantial interest in the outcome and that there's a conflict if he represents the law's Republican authors. His spokeswoman, Gillian Drummond, didn't immediately respond to an email asking if he'll take the same position in the Democratic Party's lawsuit.

Republicans have hired their own attorneys to defend them in the lawsuits.

Liberal advocacy group One Wisconsin Now persuaded U.S. District Judge James Peterson in January to strike down sections of the lame-duck law that restricted early in-person voting. The ruling came as part of a larger lawsuit challenging Republican-authored voting laws. The case is currently before the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. □

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Snowman pops up in Vegas as city sees rare winter weather

By KEN RITTER and MICHELLE

L. PRICE

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Winter storms in the U.S. Southwest brought rare snowfall Thursday to the Las Vegas Strip, dusting casino marquees and prompting revelers to erect a snowman near the famous "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign.

The National Weather Service reported the first significant snowfall at McCarran International Airport in a decade with 0.8 inches (2 centimeters) falling by Thursday afternoon.

"We expected cold, but not snow," tourist Lila de Guerrero said after taking a photo at the Las Vegas sign wearing a puffer coat and hat. De Guerrero, who is visiting from El Salvador, said it was the first time she had ever seen snow.

German tourist Daniela Huber said she was surprised that her vacation to the desert wasn't much of an escape from winter.

"We thought it was strange because we came from Germany, where it snows all the time," she said.

Some suburban foothill areas near Las Vegas were pillow white after getting several inches of snow. On the casino-lined Las Vegas Strip, the snow was fleeting, melting faster than a bad gamblers' luck.

Outside the city, authorities closed portions of the main routes from Las Vegas to Los Angeles and Phoenix because of snow, ice and limited visibility.

About 50 miles of Interstate 15 closed from Primm, Nevada, to Baker, California. The Nevada Department of Transportation reported a 22-mile line of cars and trucks backed up on U.S. 93 between Boulder City, Nevada, and Kingman, Ari-

zona.

Snowstorms also blanketed other parts of the

Drought Monitor.

In Nevada, snow delayed flights at McCarran airport

sey, everyone stays inside. When it snows in Las Vegas, everyone goes outside and

commute into the city.

"A lot of people have never seen snow here."

Forecasters say the snowfall could reach 3 inches by Friday on western and southern outskirts of the city, but rain could reduce accumulation.

McCarran airport recorded 3.6 inches (9.1 centimeters) on Dec. 17, 2008.

Las Vegas schools were open, but the Clark County School District canceled after-school programs in anticipation of freezing conditions on the roads.

Nevada Trooper Jason Buratczuk said he saw almost a foot of accumulated snow in some suburban areas, and chains were required for vehicles on the main highway through a mountain pass between Las Vegas and Pahrump.

The National Weather Service issued a winter weather advisory for the Las Vegas metropolitan area until early Friday morning.

Rain showers were expected throughout the afternoon. But as temperatures drop closer to freezing later Thursday, more snow could fall, meteorologist Jenn Varian said. □



A man, who declined to give his name, takes a picture of a small snowman at the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign along the Las Vegas Strip, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

Southwest, further easing drought conditions while clogging traffic in California, and forcing the closure of Interstate 40 and an airport in Flagstaff, Arizona. Barney Helmick, director of the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport, said its only runway closed when the visibility level hit zero.

Intense snow also forced the closure of schools and businesses in the region.

Snow coated large areas of the desert outside Los Angeles and left traffic stalled near Joshua Tree National Park.

Wet weather this winter has almost washed drought conditions out of California, according to the U.S.

and traffic on highways.

"We don't have snowplows," airport spokeswoman Christine Crews said as she tallied about 100 flight cancellations because of snow and ice.

"But we have airfield maintenance vehicles and sweepers ready to go."

Some flight delays reached more than two hours, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

Attorney Al Lasso, who moved to Las Vegas from New Jersey 25 years ago, snapped a photo of a ruler standing in 7 inches (17.8 centimeters) of snow on his back patio in the foothill community of Summerlin. "When it snows in New Jer-

makes snow angels," Lasso said during his slow, 15-mile

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Evictions, rent hikes push Oregon to statewide rent control

By ANDREW SELSKY

Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Faced with a housing shortage and skyrocketing rents, Oregon is poised to become the first state to impose mandatory rent controls, with a measure establishing tenant protections moving swiftly through the Legislature.

Many residents have testified in favor of the legislation, describing anxiety and hardship as they face higher rents. Some have gone up by as much as almost 100 percent — forcing people to move, stay with friends or even live in their vehicles.

The Oregon housing shortage is getting worse because of a big influx of people moving to the state — lured by the state's job opportunities and its forests, mountains, coastline and relaxed lifestyle. Many move from California, where the cost of living is often more expensive.

Cities across the West Coast are struggling with soaring housing prices and a growing homelessness problem. The small southern Oregon city of Medford recently authorized churches to offer car camping for the homeless on their parking lots. A state legislative House committee on Wednesday backed the measure, sending it to the full chamber for a vote as



In this photo taken Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019, a committee of the Oregon House of Representatives debates a bill in Salem, Ore., that would make Oregon the first state to impose mandatory rent controls statewide.

soon as next week. The state Senate passed it last week. "I look forward to signing the bill," said Brown, a Democrat.

The committee rejected an amendment that would have exempted cities with populations under 150,000 and another that would have delayed the measure from becoming law until Jan. 1, 2020, instead of immediately after Brown signs it. "We've waited too long as it is, and there are too many people living in tents. It is an emergency," said Rep. Tawna Sanchez, a Portland Democrat and

member of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing that endorsed the legislation.

Lawmakers said Oregon will be a pioneer in statewide rent control if the measure becomes law. New York has a statewide rent control law but cities can choose whether to participate.

California restricts the ability of cities to impose rent control. Last November, voters defeated a ballot initiative that would have overturned that law.

"Homelessness and affordability have no boundar-

ies," said Rep. Mark Meek, a Democrat from a Portland suburb. "We're going to be leading the nation now with this legislation."

Oregon's measure prohibits landlords from terminating month-to-month leases without cause after 12 months of occupancy and limits rent hikes to once per year. Those increases are limited to 7 percent above the annual change in the consumer price index.

Landlords can terminate tenancies only with 90 days' written notice and payment of one month's rent, with exemptions in some

Associated Press

cases. A landlord can refuse to renew a fixed-term lease if the tenant receives three lease violation warnings within 12 months and the landlord gives 90 days' notice.

The Oregon Rental Housing Association, which represents small-scale landlords, said the measure protects good tenants while not encouraging landlords to leave the business and invest their money elsewhere.

"I believe most landlords will be able to adapt and operate within the parameters," said Jim Straub, the group's legislative director.

Eric Lint, who lives in Bend, one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., urged lawmakers to pass the protections because of spiraling rents. The medical lab where he works is chronically understaffed because potential hires say there is a lack of affordable housing.

Lint said his hourly pay has risen 8 percent over five years. Meanwhile, his rent has increased 66 percent. He plans to move away in the fall but did not say where in his testimony.

Anna Pena, a senior at the University of Oregon in Eugene who works full time, described living in a house smaller than 1,200 square feet (111 square meters) with five roommates and spending over half her income on rent that then increased by 15 percent.v

Feds: El Chapo's sons indicted on drug conspiracy charges

By MICHAEL BALSAMO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two sons of notorious drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman have been indicted on drug conspiracy charges, the Justice Department said Thursday.

Joaquin Guzman Lopez, 34, and Ovidio Guzman Lopez, 28, are charged in a single-count indictment that was unsealed last week in Washington.

Prosecutors allege the two brothers conspired to distribute cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana into the U.S. from Mexico



In this Jan. 8, 2016 file photo, a handcuffed Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman is made to face the press as he is escorted to a helicopter by Mexican soldiers and marines at a federal hangar in Mexico City.

Associated Press

and elsewhere in the world from 2008 to 2018. They are both believed to be living in Mexico and remain fugitives.

During a trial that lasted more than three months, prosecutors portrayed El Chapo as the calculating leader of a bloodthirsty smuggling operation that funneled tons of cocaine and other drugs into American cities. The offenses could put him behind bars for the rest of his life. Prosecutors have said Guzman, who twice escaped from prison in Mexico and was extradited to the U.S.

last year for his trial, had amassed a multibillion-dollar fortune smuggling tons of cocaine and other drugs in a vast supply chain that reached well north of the border.

His lawyers raised concerns of potential juror misconduct after a juror told VICE News that several members of the panel looked at media coverage of the case and followed Twitter feeds of reporters, against a judge's orders, making them aware of potentially prejudicial material that jurors weren't supposed to see.□

Police: Texas man confessed in hammer death of daughter, 2



This undated photo provided by the Orange County Sheriff's Office shows Yovahnis Roque.

Associated Press

ORANGE, Texas (AP) — A Southeast Texas man accused of bludgeoning his 2-year-old daughter to death with a hammer was naked and blood-stained when he told police officers he had killed the toddler, according to an affidavit.

An officer's body camera captured 26-year-old Yovahnis Roque confessing Tuesday in the death of his

child at their home in Orange, near the Louisiana border, according to the police affidavit. Roque was arrested and charged with capital murder.

Roque lived with his mother at the house and it was she who found the girl's body and called police.

Officers found Roque "completely covered in blood" and discovered the girl's body in a closet, the

affidavit says. Orange police Capt. Robert Enmon has described it as the most horrific crime he's dealt with in his 29-year career, calling it "the crime scene of nightmares."

In court Wednesday, a judge was explaining the capital murder charge when Roque exclaimed: "The government made

me do it." He was ordered to be held on \$2 million bond in the Orange County jail. Online jail records don't show whether he has an attorney to speak on his behalf.

Enmon said Thursday that authorities investigated a disturbance at the house several months earlier, but that the call didn't appear

to involve the child. Roque and the child previously lived in Florida. A friend of the suspect, Abner Santiago, told the Beaumont Enterprise that he received a series of messages from Roque on Tuesday, including one in which he told his friend to start digging because there was going to be "an all-out war." □

Study finds spike in Pennsylvania child abuse-related deaths

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A state study released Thursday found the number of Pennsylvania children killed or nearly killed after abuse had occurred spiked recently, likely driven by a new definition of abuse and an uptick in its reporting in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky and Roman Catholic clergy child sexual abuse scandals.

The state Human Services Department report into fatalities and near fatalities during 2015 and 2016 showed both types of reports were up sharply after being fairly level for the preceding six years.

The number of substantiated fatalities and near fatalities ranged between 80 and 92 from 2009 through 2014. In 2016, that number was 127.

The study attributes the rise in part to revisions to the state Child Protective

Service Law that took effect at the end of 2014 because the state expanded the definition of abuse, who can be considered a perpetrator, and who must report suspected abuse. Those legislative changes were adopted in response to the Sandusky and clerical abuse scandals.

During the 2014-16 period, the number of calls to the ChildLine system for reporting suspected abuse in Pennsylvania increased by about 50 percent, from nearly 30,000 to more than 44,000. A team that analyzed the data for the state recommended Pennsylvania provide more support for county-level death review teams and expand education about child abuse deaths for schools, police and those who provide behavioral health and substance abuse disorder treatment. □

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Abuse victims: Italian law helps bishops dodge investigation

By FRANCES D'EMILIO

Associated Press

ROME (AP) — U.S. and Italian advocates for victims of pedophile priests are pressing for Italy to overhaul legislation that allows bishops to dodge accountability for predator clergy in the predominantly Roman Catholic country where the church wields considerable political influence.

A U.S. state legislator joined an Italian lawmaker and American and Italian victims of pedophile clergy at the Italian Parliament on Thursday to put a spotlight on what they described as significant gaps in how the Italian justice system handles the problem.

Francesco Zanardi, who heads an Italian survivors' advocacy group, said Italy must revise its 1929 Lateran Treaty with the Holy See. He noted that under that agreement, bishops can refuse to respond to magistrates investigating their alleged roles in hiding pedophile crimes by priests.

Thus, as long as they personally are not being investigated for abuse, bishops



Survivor of sex abuse Francesco Zanardi, flanked by Mark Rozzi, holds a book titled Divine Justice, reporting on how the Vatican covers up cases of priests who sexually abused, during a press conference at the Italian Lower Chamber press hall in Rome, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

Associated Press

"have the right to refuse to answer questions from the judiciary," Zanardi told a news conference in the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament's lower house. The same treaty, he noted, also requires magistrates to inform church hierarchy they have started investigations of priests, effectively giving bishops more time to possibly discourage witnesses or victims from coming forward.

Italian law doesn't require

bishops to denounce cases of abuse by clergy, Zanardi said.

"There is a legislative vacuum," he said. The Catholic church holds a privileged place in Italian society and wields significant influence in politics. Parishes in small towns and big cities alike run after-school and weekend recreation programs for youngsters, since public schools don't offer them. That gives priests easy ac-

cess to minors.

A U.S. advocate for accountability for pedophile priests noted that the American Catholic church was forced to "be more transparent" after victims came forward as adults when several states opened windows on statutes of limitations. That nudged U.S. bishops to adopt a "zero tolerance" policy toward abusive priests.

But the Italian church still allows itself to be guided by canon law, which "gives the priest a second chance" and "leaves it to the bishop's discretion" on whether a priest should be punished or removed from children, said Anne Barrett Doyle, co-director of BishopAccountability.org. Earlier this month, Italy was taken to task by the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child for its failure to properly police the Catho-

lic church. The committee called for an independent inquiry into what it said was the abnormally low number of investigations and prosecutions of child sex abuse committed by priests.

With priests considered respected figures in Italian society, the words of Pennsylvania state Rep. Mark Rozzi sounded unusually blunt when he told how he was raped by a priest when he was 13, and how every time he showers, he still shudders at that memory. As he has campaigned in his home state, Rozzi urged Italian lawmakers to open up windows of opportunity in statutes of limitations so adults can denounce abuse suffered as children. Rozzi drew on his own experience when he wondered aloud whether a 13-year-old would know what is meant by a statute of limitations. □

Spain: Pro-secession protesters block roads in Catalonia

By JOSEPH WILSON

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Protesters backing Catalonia's secession from Spain clashed with police and blocked roads across the northeastern region Thursday during a student and worker strike over the trial of a dozen separatist leaders.

Regional police said four people were arrested when officers met resistance while trying to clear groups of protesters who had stopped traffic. The regional emergency service said 37 people were treated for minor injuries.

Twelve officers were also injured in the clashes, according to police. Protesters threw rocks at police lines and burned tires on some highways.

Regional transportation authorities said the protests disrupted traffic on main thoroughfares in Barcelona and affected travel on a half-dozen major highways

and train lines elsewhere in Catalonia.

The general strike was organized by small unions of pro-independence workers and students. On paper, they were demanding improved social policies, including a 35-hour work week and a higher minimum wage.

However, the protesters carried pro-secession flags and chanted slogans for the release of the 12 separatists who are on trial in Spain's Madrid-based Supreme Court for their roles in a 2017 independence declaration.

In Barcelona, the region's capital, students in favor of secession held a mid-day march attended by 13,000 people, according to city police.

Tens of thousands more joined an evening march behind a banner that read "Self-determination is not a crime." A grassroots pro-secession group, ANC, organized the march. □

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UK acknowledges key trade deals won't be ready by Brexit day

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The British government acknowledged Thursday that trade deals with major countries such as Japan and Turkey will not be in place by the planned Brexit day of March 29, while the European Union's chief said he remains downbeat about Britain avoiding a chaotic departure from the bloc.

Britain's international trade secretary, Liam Fox, claimed in 2017 that by the day the U.K. left the EU, the country would be in a position to continue the trade deals with 70 other nations it has as an EU member.

But only a handful of the deals have been finalized, including one with the tiny Faroe Islands.

As for the rest, Britain's Department for International Trade said Thursday "it remains our priority to conclude trade continuity agreements with these



Protestors in costumes with EU and Union flags demonstrate about the process of Brexit outside EU headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019.

countries by exit day or as soon as possible thereafter."

The most significant of the pending deals is with Ja-

pan. A Japan-EU free-trade agreement took effect at the beginning of February, removing hundreds of millions of euros (dollars) in du-

ties paid by EU exporters to the Asian nation.

A proposed U.K.-EU divorce agreement includes a 21-month transition phase

that would keep Britain operating under EU rules while the government works out future trade arrangements. Britain's Parliament has rejected the deal, and the government has failed to win concessions from the EU that lawmakers demanded.

EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Thursday that despite constructive talks with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday night, he doesn't have much hope a divorce agreement will be in place by March 29.

A no-deal Brexit "will have terrible economic and social consequences both in Britain and on the continent," Juncker said at a EU conference, adding he was doing his utmost so "the worst can be avoided."

But he said, "I am not very optimistic when it comes to this issue." □

Estonians kick off online voting for March election



In this file photo dated Sunday, March 1, 2015, people fill their ballot papers in voting booths at a polling station in Tallinn, Estonia.

Associated Press

By JARI TANNER
Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Balloting has started for next month's general election in Estonia, an online voting pioneer, amid tight protective measures a day after Microsoft warned that hackers linked to Russia had allegedly targeted democratic institutions in Europe.

Kristi Kirsberg, media adviser to Estonia's electoral committee, said Thursday that the Baltic country — the first in the world to use online balloting for a na-

tional election in 2005 — has trained candidates to properly secure their home pages and was closely tracking fake news and disinformation.

Apart from educating candidates on cyber threats, special attention has been given to protecting political parties' websites, she said.

Excluding "some minor Facebook postings," no interference attempts have been reported. Kirsberg said Estonia's government agencies have set up hot-

lines to major social media companies like Facebook, who are ready to assist election officials.

"The State Chancellery has helped us to build ties with Facebook, Twitter and Google so that we can quickly inform them in case some kind of disinformation on the election starts to spread," Kirsberg said.

She said that one government official was fully focused on monitoring domestic, Western and Russian news sites as well as social media. □

More than 150 IS militants handed over to Iraq from Syria

By SARAH EL DEEB
QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
Associated Press

OUTSIDE BAGHOUZ, Syria

(AP) — U.S.-backed Syrian forces fighting the Islamic State group handed over more than 150 Iraqi members of the group to Iraq, an Iraqi security official said Thursday, marking the biggest repatriation from Syria of captured militants so far. The official said the IS militants were handed over to the Iraqi side late Wednesday, and that they were now in a "safe place" under investigation.

The transfer comes as the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces is involved in a standoff over the final sliver of land held by IS in eastern Syria, close to the Iraqi border.

Many believe the IS threat won't end with the pocket's recapture and that an insurgency is underway. In a foreboding sign Thursday, the IS claimed responsibility for back-to-back suicide attacks that hit a village miles away, leaving more than a dozen people dead in a rare targeting of civilians.

A few hundred people — many of them women and terrified-looking children — were evacuated Wednesday from the group's tiny tent camp on the banks of the Euphrates River, signaling an imminent end to the territorial rule of the militants' self-declared "caliphate" that once stretched across a third of both Syria and Iraq.

Some 300 IS militants, along with hundreds of civilians believed to be mostly their families, have been under siege for more than a week in the tent camp in the village of Baghouz. It wasn't clear how many civilians remain holed up inside, along with the militants.

More trucks were sent in Thursday to the tip of a corridor leading to the camp to evacuate more people, but Associated Press journalists on the ground outside Baghouz said no civilians emerged.

"We thought more civilians will come out today and

we sent 50 trucks over," said an SDF commander who goes by his nom de guerre,

to approach or film them. A large convoy of coalition vehicles, armored and

The Iraqi security official, who spoke Thursday on condition of anonymity in

The 24-year-old Hoda Muthana has said she made a mistake and regrets aligning herself with IS. She is now in a refugee camp in Syria along with others who fled the militants.

On Thursday, back-to-back suicide car bombings in a market in Deir el-Zour province killed 14 civilians and an SDF fighter, a commander said.

IS claimed responsibility through its Amaq news agency and said the attack targeted an SDF vehicle.

Adnan Afrin, of the SDF, said the two blasts went off in the village of Shahil, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the al-Omar Oil Field base. He said two suicide bombers stopped their cars and detonated their explosives in the market.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported a car bomb that was detonated remotely as a convoy that includes workers and technicians who work at the oil field was passing. The Britain-based war monitor said 20 were killed and others wounded.

Also on Thursday, a French diplomatic official and an SDF official said they are trying to verify reports that Fabien Clain, a Frenchman who is one of Europe's most-wanted members of IS, was killed in an airstrike in Syria.

Clain is considered a key figure in the 2015 attacks in Paris, and it was his voice that claimed responsibility in the name of Islamic State for the deadly onslaught in his home country.

Neither official would be named given the ongoing verifications in Baghouz, and a U.S. military spokesman said the coalition could not confirm the reports.

The Baghouz pocket's recapture by U.S.-backed Syrian fighters would spell the territorial defeat of IS and allow Trump to begin withdrawing American troops from northern Syria, as he has pledged to do, opening a new chapter in Syria's eight-year civil war. □



Children ride in the back of a truck that is part of a convoy evacuating hundreds out of the last territory held by Islamic State militants, in Baghouz, eastern Syria, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019.

Associated Press

Aram. "We don't know why they are not coming out." Another SDF official said IS militants closed the roads so the civilians could not come out, citing an absence of military pressure on the group as a possible reason.

Nearly 20,000 people left through a humanitarian corridor on foot from the IS holdout earlier this month but the militants closed the passage and no civilians left for a week until Wednesday. The presence of civilians and possibly senior members of the militant group in Baghouz have slowed the group's defeat.

Hundreds of women and children from Wednesday's evacuation could be seen in the middle of the desert on the way out of Baghouz, in what appeared to be a screening area in an open field. SDF fighters could be seen among them but journalists were not allowed

vans, headed in their direction.

The U.S.-led coalition declined to comment on the evacuation.

The issue of captured foreign fighters in Syria poses a major conundrum for European and other countries whose nationals have been imprisoned in Syria. The SDF is holding more than 900 foreign fighters in prisons it runs in the country's north, many of them Iraqis and Europeans.

The Kurdish-led SDF — and more recently President Donald Trump — have called on these countries to take back their nationals. The SDF says it cannot afford to keep the captured foreigners in Syria, but few of their countries want them back.

Earlier this month, Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi said Iraq will take back all Iraqi IS militants in Syria, as well as thousands of their family members.

line with regulations, said the SDF are holding more than 20,000 Iraqis suspected of IS membership as well as their families in prisons and camps in northern Syria.

An Iraqi intelligence official said among those were around 500 Iraqi IS fighters, adding that these will be transferred back home in batches.

The intelligence official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said the first group of 150 was transferred to Iraqi authorities aboard 16 pickup trucks Wednesday night and that they have been moved to the capital Baghdad for interrogation.

An Alabama woman who joined IS in Syria also made headlines after the U.S. said Wednesday she won't be allowed to return with her toddler son because she is not an American citizen. Her lawyer is challenging that claim.



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Pacific typhoon expected to lash Guam with gusty wind, rain

By CALEB JONES
GRACE GARCES BORDALLO
Associated Press

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) — A growing typhoon in the Pacific is heading toward the Mariana Islands and could lash Guam with strong winds, rain and surf this weekend. The U.S. National Weather Service in Guam reports Typhoon Wutip was packing 100 mph (161 kph) winds and will continue to intensify through Saturday. The storm was about 480 miles (772 kilometers) south-east of Guam Friday.

Typhoon warnings remain in place for parts of the Federated States of Micronesia, and tropical storm warnings are in effect for Guam and other nearby islands. The typhoon is expected to track just south of Guam Saturday into Sunday. "When it's near Guam, (wind) will be up to 115 mph (185 kph), but we won't see that on the island," said meteorologist Michael Ziobro of the National Weather Service in Guam. Wutip has typhoon-force winds extending about 35 miles (56 kilometers) from its center and



Jared Duenas fills up his pickup truck with gasoline in the village of Sinajana, Guam in preparation of a typhoon on Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

tropical storm-force winds up to 150 miles (241 kilometers) away. Antoninette Arriola, a 48-year-old school aide, was doing laundry as part of her storm preparations. "After the storm is over, a lot of people are going to be here washing, so we wanted to do it before then."

She said she started her typhoon preparations earlier in the day. "We took off the tarp from outside our house

that covers where we park, and we also bought some canned goods like Vienna sausage, Spam, corned beef, batteries, crackers, bread. We recently bought a small freezer so that we can put our ice and frozen meats in there."

Tyrone Quinata, 23, purchased coffee as his first storm preparation. He added batteries for his flashlights and radio. "I think we'll be fine," he said.

The peak season for typhoons in the region is late

Associated Press

summer into fall, but strong storms in the winter are not uncommon. "The Western Pacific is the only basin on the planet that has tropical cyclones year-round," said meteorologist Tom Birchard of the National Weather Service in Honolulu. "It's somewhat unusual, but it's not outside the realm of expectation." Something that was unusual about Wutip, Birchard said, was where it formed. "It formed at a very low latitude," Birchard said. "When you go to school and they teach you tropical meteorology, they tell you have to be more than 5 degrees from the equator for a tropical cyclone to form. Well this one formed at about 3.5 degrees north."

A westerly wind burst near the equator spun up Wutip shortly after the same winds formed tropical cyclone Oma in the southern hemisphere, Birchard said.

Westerly wind bursts in the area are often associated with El Nino weather patterns and can help create twin storms — one on either side of the equator, he said. □

Daughter of ex-Mao secretary boycotts Communist-led memorial



In this February 2009 photo released by Li Nanyang, Communist Party veteran Li Rui, left, chats with his daughter Li Nanyang at their home in Beijing.

Associated Press

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The daughter of a Chinese Communist Party veteran boycotted his funeral Wednesday, calling it an improper tribute to a man who once worked for Mao Zedong but later became a fierce critic of the regime.

Li Rui's memorial was held at the Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, where many high-ranking former officials are buried. His daughter Li Nanyang said the ceremony was against her father's wishes, which according to her were: to

not have a memorial, to not be brought to Babaoshan, and to not be draped with the party flag.

Li was 101 years old when he died of organ failure in Beijing last Saturday.

He was "completely disappointed" by the party, his daughter said in a phone interview from her home in the U.S. He felt that China was devoid of freedom of speech and that corruption was rampant in a system which allowed Communist officials to get rich while ordinary people's lives stagnated, she said.

"I believe that if my father's soul is in heaven, he will be crying at the sight" of his body covered by a party flag, Li Nanyang wrote in a statement to supporters. She said she chose not to attend the funeral in order to make her father's stance clear.

"How hypocritical can you be?" she remarked, calling it "very ironic" that the leaders would appear to honor her father when his books are banned in mainland China. They give an inside account of the party's tumultuous history. □

Brigade of volunteers vow to bring aid to Venezuela's needy

By FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— As President Nicolas Maduro deploys missiles and infantrymen to Venezuela's borders bracing for what he claims is U.S. coup plot disguised as humanitarian aid, his opponents are rallying their own troops. Nurses, doctors, engineers and homemakers have volunteered by the thousands to distribute the food and medicine in the face of a government ban. The citizen brigade is one of the most ambitious undertakings Venezuela's opposition has attempted. The plan — to bring tons of food and medicine into the country for sick and malnourished Venezuelans — is in open defiance of Maduro, who considers it a foreign military intervention.

The volunteers anticipate running into roadblocks by soldiers who remain loyal to Maduro. They know that their chances of breaking through are slim, but they're undaunted.

"There's a lot of concern about how it's going to come into the country," said Dr. Danny Golindano, speaking to a group of volunteers through a crackly microphone at a Caracas plaza. "As health providers, it's our duty."

The opposition plans to mobilize on Saturday. Leaders say they will make a first attempt to bring the emergency food and medicine across the border from Colombia, Brazil and the Caribbean island of Curacao, all of which have been blocked by the government. Air and sea travel were halted from Curacao this week and the border with Brazil was ordered closed indefinitely on Thursday. Earlier this month, Ven-

ezuelan troops barricaded the main bridge linking the country to the Colombian border city of Cucuta,

help through a designated website, organizers say. Galindano gathered dozens of volunteers one day

lead in distributing it. Four large hospitals will function as collection centers and distribute it to regional



In this Feb. 19, 2019 photo, people fill forms to join to the group of volunteers that will help to introduce humanitarian aid into Venezuela, during a meeting to recruit volunteers, at a square in Caracas, Venezuela.

Associated Press

where U.S. aid is stored. The opposition has not detailed how they will overcome those government obstacles.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido, who has declared himself Venezuela's interim president to overthrow Maduro, has called on "caravans" of volunteers to help bring in and deliver the supplies to the neediest Venezuelans. He's repeatedly called on soldiers to stand down and reject Maduro's orders blocking them, but large-scale defections haven't appeared.

Young and old, the army of aid volunteers answering Guaido's call includes hospital orderlies, lawyers, psychologists, university students and retirees. So far, more than 800,000 volunteers have signed up to

this week at a tree-covered Caracas plaza to give them instructions on the humanitarian aid. Holding a microphone, he explained the large-scale crisis crippling medical care, a reality many have endured with their own families.

Fired from a public hospital in Caracas for reporting the deaths of eight cancer patients under unsanitary conditions, Galindano has turned to charity work to prevent more Venezuelans from dying due to lack of medicine and supplies. He now serves as a national coordinator for the Venezuelan non-profit Doctors for Health.

Addressing the crowd of volunteers, Galindano explained that once the humanitarian aid enters Venezuela, non-profit groups and churches will take the

health centers, he said. Alesia Santacroce, a lawyer and university professor for the past 30 years, listened closely, saying she felt compelled to volunteer, although it's unclear what role she will play. She and her mother already run a soup kitchen that provides free meals to 500 poor people every weekend.

She's among millions of Venezuelans filled with a renewed "great hope," she said, since the 35-year-old Guaido catapulted onto the national stage last month and declared himself Venezuela's rightful president — a move aimed at ending what he called Maduro's "tyranny," and backed by the United States and dozens of other countries.

"I'll go wherever I have to go to help humanitarian

aid get in," she said. "I'll even go to the border." Venezuela has been under 20 years of socialist rule, which critics blame for leading the once-wealthy oil nation to the brink of collapse. Hyperinflation and widespread shortages of food and medicine has driven at least 3 million to flee, while those staying behind struggle to afford scarce food and medicine. Maduro refuses to step down after being re-elected last year in a vote widely criticized as fraudulent because some popular opposition candidates were barred from running. He says the United States is leading an economic war against Venezuela, and the humanitarian aid is part of a coup plot to overthrow him and rob the country of its oil wealth.

The aid standoff has prompted billionaire British mogul Richard Branson to organize a concert on Friday in Cucuta aimed at raising millions of dollars to help struggling Venezuelans and open the border. Maduro's government responded by saying it will hold its own concert on the opposite side of the border. Opposition leader Roberto Patino, who is organizing the volunteers, said Saturday's initial foray to bring in the aid represents a "starting point." If Maduro's military blocks them, they will continue to press to open the humanitarian channel until they succeed, he said, adding that the citizen brigades will not try to force the aid into the country.

"It's about appealing to the conscience of the armed forces and officials who are on the border," Patino said.

"We are doing everything possible to minimize the possibilities of repression." □

Brazil's Bolsonaro proposes raising pension retirement age

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) —

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is presenting a proposal to make Brazilians work longer before they can receive a pension as

part of an effort to rescue the troubled retirement system.

The plan presented to Congress on Wednesday would increase the minimum retirement age to 65 for men

and 62 for women.

Currently, many workers can retire in their early 50s. Economists have long argued that Brazil's pension system isn't sustainable because people are living

much longer after retirement.

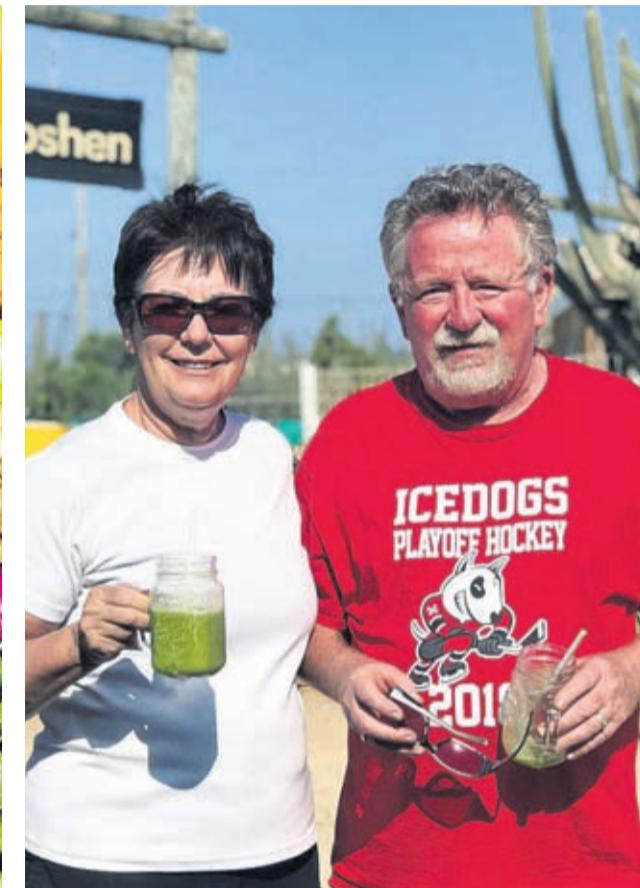
As a congressman for 27 years, Bolsonaro often voted against proposals to reform the pension system. He now says he was wrong

to do that, and made pension reform a central pillar of his campaign last year. Several attempts in recent years to curtail benefits have failed. □

LOCAL



Hope for All, Green for Health



by HopeAruba Movement

NOORD — Aruba is a nation of hopeful individuals, who want the best for their island. It is a fact that the Social challenges facing our island affect us all in one way or another. Whether it is child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, life-controlling addictions, the high rate of high-school drop outs, increasing poverty, etc. etc., when one is affected, we are all affected.

While we understand that it is the role of government to be the primary catalyst in providing the framework, platform and financing for addressing these social challenges, we also understand that the government is not necessarily the only agent to heal these issues. Understanding both our responsibility and privilege as citizens, whether individual or corporate, to play an active part in creating the future we want to see,

is critical if we are to heal our nation.

We must understand the severe consequences of the long-term mismanagement of Public Finances and how this affects us all, directly or indirectly.

Continued on Page 14



Hope for All, Green for Health



Continued from Page 13

Government financial aid for social organizations has dropped by more than 50% in the past years. So what are we to do? A group of citizens decided...we will start by taking responsibility!

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More information is to be found at Facebook HopeAruba Movement and goshen sustainable development corporation vba. □

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Commemorative Emerald Coin for Emerald Ambassadors



PALM BEACH —Recently, Darline S. De Cuba of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Emerald Ambassadors. The certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

The honorees are Mr. John & Mary Jurkiewicz from Stratford, Connecticut. The couple has been coming to the island for more than 40 consecutive years.

The honorees stated that they love coming to the island for its friendly people, beautiful weather, gorgeous beaches, the cleanliness all over the island and the safety they feel here.

Ms. De Cuba together with the representatives of The Renaissance Resort presented the commemorative Emerald Coin and Emerald certificate to the honorees, and also handed over some presents and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home away from home. □

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It's Carnival!

ORANJESTAD — While the official opening of the carnival season took off with the Torch Parade at January 5, the island caught the carnival fever and since then entered a series of carnival events that go on until March 3.

History

In the 1920's the first carnival events were organized by social clubs that started private costume and masquerade parties. This year we celebrate Aruba's 65th carnival, which means that the first grand parade took place in 1955. Since then Aruba's carnival has grown big and is now able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the most renowned Carnival celebrations around the world. Aruba Today has put the coming carnival events for you in a row:

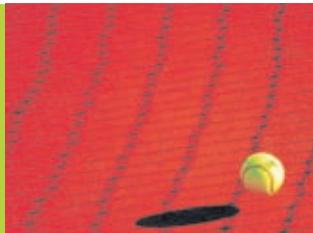


- February 23 – Jouvert Morning & Pyjama Party in San Nicolas – 3:00 AM
- February 23 – Aruba's Grand Lighting Parade in Oranjestad – 8:00 PM
- February 24 – Grand Children's Parade in San Nicolas – 1:00 PM
- February 24 – Burning of Momito in Carnival Village – 7:30 PM
- February 28 – Lighting Parade in San Nicolas – 8:00 PM
- March 1 — Hebbe Hebbe Music Festival parking lot Post Office – 8:00 PM
- March 2 – Grand Carnival Parade in San Nicolas – 10:00 AM
- March 3 – 65th Grand Carnival Parade in Oranjestad – 10:00 AM
- March 3 – Burning of King Momo (ending of Grand Parade) 8:00 PM

For more information you can visit Facebook page SMAC, the official carnival organization. □



SPORTS



San Antonio Spurs guard DeMar DeRozan, left, hits a shot over Portland Trail Blazers forward Al-Farouq Aminu during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019.

Associated Press

DeRozan likely to receive warm welcome in Toronto return

By IAN HARRISON
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — From fellow athletes to star entertainers, DeMar DeRozan has seen plenty of celebrities soaking up an extended round of appreciative applause from fans.

"When they get that long standing ovation, I always thought that was the coolest thing in the world," DeRozan said Thursday. "I've never received one." Friday night, it could be his turn.

DeRozan is back north of the border for the first time since the Toronto Raptors traded him last summer.

His new team, the San Antonio Spurs, face the Raptors on Friday.

A four-time All-Star in Toronto who helped the Raptors to five straight playoff appearances, DeRozan is likely to receive a warm welcome when he is introduced.

Continued on Page 23

EL TIGRE



McIlroy seizes lead at WGC-Mexico; Tiger, Phil struggle

Tiger Woods hits the ball on the second hole during the first day of competition of the WGC-Mexico Championship at the Chapultepec Golf Club in Mexico City, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

Associated Press

McIlroy opens with 63 as Woods struggles in Mexico debut

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Rory McIlroy flirted with a hole-in-one on the same par 4 where Tiger Woods hit out-of-bounds with his first shot in Mexico.

That's about how their days went Thursday in the Mexico Championship.

McIlroy, already off to a solid start on the back nine, hit a 2-iron on the 305-yard opening hole at Chapultepec Golf Club that landed on the front of the green and was rolling just left of the pin when it settled 6 feet away, leading to an eagle that carried him to an 8-under 63 and a one-shot lead over Dustin Johnson.

Woods got the raucous Mexican introduction for his opening tee shot, a 5-wood that also landed on the green — the wrong green. The ball bounced hard off a temporary green to the left and beyond the out-of-bounds stake into the bushes.

And then he nearly did it again, and ultimately had to get up-and-down from 60 feet away in a bunker to escape with double bogey. After a burst of birdies, he struggled to make much the rest of the way and opened with a 71.

"I pulled across it to try and cut it and hit it dead off the toe," Woods said. "Hit both of them dead off the toe."



Jordan Spieth prepares to putt with his father Shawn Spieth serving as his caddie during the first day of competition of the WGC-Mexico Championship at the Chapultepec Golf Club in Mexico City, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

McIlroy's 2-iron was the signature shot in an exquisite start to this World Golf Championship. He was 6 under through an eight-hole stretch in the middle of the round, and a 20-foot birdie on No. 8 toward the end of his round is what gave him the lead over Johnson, who played in the group behind.

It was his second straight week with a 63.

"I wouldn't say it was easy," McIlroy said. "I hit a lot of good golf shots, but I left myself a lot of tap-ins for birdies. As 63s go, I shot 63 at Riviera last week, but this

felt probably a little more stress-free."

He described his 2-iron as close to perfect, just how he envisioned it, a little cut to take off some distance in the thin air of Mexico City. The only blemish on his round came at the par-5 sixth, when he pulled his tee shot into the trees and looked as though he would have to punch out back to the fairway.

Standing over the ball, McIlroy was looking up. He saw a gap between two trees with a tiny limb, so even if he clipped one, his 8-iron should have been enough

to give him a reasonable shot at the green.

There was one limb that concerned him, which McIlroy described as "something a dog would pick up."

"The one branch it could not hit, it hit," he said. "It all levels out at the end of the day. I'm just in a good frame of mind, managing my game well, putting went good. And if you putt well, it takes pressure off the rest of your game. And that's where it's at."

Johnson won the Mexico Championship two years ago, part of three straight victories during the best

Associated Press

stretch of golf he ever played. Johnson said he struggled with his swing at Pebble Beach and Riviera, and worked all week on the range in Mexico.

"It's starting to feel the way it did two years ago," he said.

Much like McIlroy, there wasn't a lot of stress in his game. Johnson only missed three of the tree-lined fairways and was rarely out of position except on No. 12, where he lost his drive well to the right.

He had no shot to the green, so he tried to put it in the bunker. It went in and out of the bunker, onto the fringe and he holed the putt from 20 feet for his third straight birdie to start the round.

He also had back-to-back eagle putts, driving the first green to 20 feet and hitting driver on the 383-yard second hole over the trees and onto the green — as Bubba Watson was putting — to 18 feet. He made birdie on both.

"I feel like I've got this altitude thing figured out," he said.

Justin Thomas, who lost in a playoff last year to Phil Mickelson, chipped in from 50 feet behind the green on No. 15 for eagle and was at 66. He was tied with Matt Kuchar, who already won in Mexico once this season at the Mayakoba Classic. □



Switzerland's Belinda Bencic celebrates after defeating Romania's Simona Halep in their quarterfinal match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

Associated Press

Bencic upsets Halep to reach Dubai semifinals; Kvitova wins

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Unseeded Belinda Bencic rallied to beat second-ranked Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 Thursday to reach the Dubai Championships semifinals.

Bencic, who saved six match points in the previous round against Aryna Sabalenka, failed to capitalize on an early break in the first set but Halep continued to struggle with her serve and was broken seven times in total.

Bencic broke for a 5-4 lead in the second and then raced out to a 3-0 lead in the decider, having won six games in a row. Halep, who was playing her ninth match in 13 days after reaching the final in Qa-

tar last week, got one break back but Bencic broke again for a 5-2 lead before converting her third match point.

Second-seeded Petra Kvitova had no such problems, winning the last eight games to oust Viktoria Kuzmova 6-4, 6-0 to book her spot in the last four. Kvitova, the 2013 Dubai champion, needed just 62 minutes to wrap up the win.

She will next face Su-wei Hsieh of Taiwan, who came from 5-1 down in the final set to beat fourth-seeded Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 1-6, 7-5.

It was the latest upset for Hsieh, who ousted Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber on Wednesday. □

Kane scores 2, Blackhawks beat Red Wings 5-4 in OT

By The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Patrick Kane scored two goals, including the game winner with 2:18 left in overtime, extending his point streak to 19 games and lifting the Chicago Blackhawks to a 5-4 victory over the Detroit Red Wings on Wednesday night.

Artem Anisimov, Brandon Saad and Alex DeBrincat scored for Chicago in the first period. The Blackhawks have won 10 of their last 12 games, scoring 60 goals in that span.

Dylan Larkin and Andreas Athanasiou scored two goals each for the Red Wings, who rallied from a 4-1 third-period deficit to tie it.

However, Erik Gustafsson found Kane alone to the right of the net in overtime, and the Chicago star beat goalie Jonathan Bernier for his 38th goal of the season.

FLAMES 4, ISLANDERS 2

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — Austin Czarnik and Johnny Gaudreau scored 29 seconds apart in the third period to lead Calgary. Mikael Backlund and Travis Hamonic also scored as Calgary won its third



Chicago Blackhawks right wing Patrick Kane (88) celebrates his goal in overtime of an NHL hockey game against the Detroit Red Wings, Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019, in Detroit. Chicago won 5-4.

Associated Press

straight after a four-game skid. Mike Smith stopped 17 shots.

Casey Cizikas and Anders Lee scored for the Islanders, who had tied it earlier in the third after trailing 2-0 following one period. Thomas Greiss finished with 28 saves in New York's third regulation loss in 16 games.

BRUINS 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS

2, SO

LAS VEGAS (AP) — David Backes scored in the sixth round of a shootout to lift Boston to its season-high seventh straight victory. Jake DeBrusk and Brad Marchand scored in regulation as the Bruins improved to 8-1-1 in the last 10 on the road — including wins in the first four games

of a western trip. The win streak is their longest since a 12-game run in 2014. Jaroslav Halak stopped 31 shots.

The Bruins, who are 9-0-3 in their last 12 overall, haven't lost in regulation since a 3-2 setback to the New York Rangers on Jan. 19.

Reilly Smith and Nate Schmidt scored for Vegas,

while Marc-Andre Fleury finished with 25 saves. Fleury has lost four in a row and seven of his last nine starts. He has allowed 19 goals in last five starts, and 28 in the nine-game span.

DeBrusk scored for Boston in the first round of the shootout and William Karlsson tied it for Vegas in the second.

AVALANCHE 7, JETS 1

DENVER (AP) — Nathan MacKinnon and Matt Calvert scored 11 seconds apart in the third period, Semyon Varlamov made 26 saves in another strong performance and Colorado won two in a row for the first time since late November. Carl Soderberg, Mikko Rantanen, Tyson Jost, Gabriel Landeskog and A.J. Greer also scored for the Avalanche. In addition, MacKinnon's power-play goal snapped an 0-for-29 dry spell on the man advantage.

The only score Varlamov allowed was to Kyle Connor with Colorado staked to a 4-0 lead. Connor Hellebuyck stopped 39 shots for the Jets, who lost to the Avalanche for the second time inside of a week. □

Washington Capitals acquire forward Carl Hagelin from Kings

By STEPHEN WHYNO
AP Hockey Writer

The defending Stanley Cup champion Washington Capitals got faster ahead of the NHL trade deadline by acquiring speedy winger Carl Hagelin from the Los Angeles Kings on Thursday. Washington sent a 2019 third-round pick and a conditional 2020 sixth-round pick to Los Angeles.

"We are pleased to welcome Carl to our organization," general manager Brian MacLellan said. "We felt this trade enables us to add depth up front and provides us with a veteran player with a tremendous amount of speed to help us on the penalty kill."

Hagelin must satisfy a games-played requirement in the playoffs and the Capitals must win two rounds for the Kings to get

the sixth-rounder in next year's draft.

The teams announced the trade after Washington winger Devante Smith-Pelly cleared waivers and was assigned to Hershey of the American Hockey League. The Capitals needed to wait until Smith-Pelly was claimed or cleared waivers to clear a roster spot and salary-cap space for Hagelin. The Kings still had to retain salary for the Capitals to fit in Hagelin's \$4 million salary.

Hagelin has just two goals and six assists in 38 games this season with Pittsburgh and Los Angeles. Washington is Hagelin's fifth team during his eight-year NHL career. He has 230 points in 526 regular-season games and won the Stanley Cup with the Penguins in 2016 and 2017. □



Boston Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask takes a shot off his mask by Los Angeles Kings' Carl Hagelin (62) off his mask during the this period of an NHL hockey game Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019, in Boston.

Associated Press

Shoe blowout, knee injury leave Zion, Duke to mull future

By JOEDY McCREARY

AP Sports Writer

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Duke might have to figure out what the Zion Show will look like without its namesake. And Zion Williamson could have some things of his own to consider, too.

All because of a freak injury to arguably the most exciting player in college basketball in the opening minute of the sport's fiercest rivalry, one that helped turn a widely anticipated matchup — in front of yet another crowd of celebrities, this one including Spike Lee and former President Barack Obama — into a blowout.

As his Nike shoe blew out, Williamson sprained his right knee on the first possession of what became top-ranked Duke's 88-72 loss to No. 8 North Carolina on Wednesday night.

In the aftermath of that loss, coach Mike Krzyzewski wasn't ready to look ahead. He was still trying to process just how quickly everything deflated after the injury.

"I'd rather not talk about what we're going to do," Krzyzewski said. "I'd rather talk about what just happened. Because we're going to figure out what we're going to do. So I don't have that answer."

Krzyzewski says Williamson's knee is stable and the sprain is mild, but doesn't know how much time his star freshman will miss.



Duke's Zion Williamson sits on the floor following an injury during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game against North Carolina, in Durham, N.C., Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019.

Associated Press

He doesn't have much time to find a replacement for the Atlantic Coast Conference's second-leading scorer and its most dynamic playmaker. The Blue Devils (23-3, 11-2) play Saturday night at Syracuse — which already knows how to beat a Duke team after it loses a key freshman to injury. The Or-

ange beat No. 1 Duke last month in overtime after point guard Tre Jones injured a shoulder.

Williamson averages 22.4 points, but his impact goes well beyond scoring. He also grabs 9.2 rebounds and has blocked nearly two shots per game.

In his absence, North Carolina simply dominated the paint, outscoring the Blue Devils 62-28 there while also building a 46-41 rebounding advantage. The Tar

Heels shot 51 percent — 57 percent in the second half — despite 2-for-20 shooting from 3-point range.

RJ Barrett matched a season best with 33 points, and teammate Cameron Reddish had a season-high 27 — but the rest of the team combined for just 12 points.

"I hope he's going to be OK," Barrett said of Williamson. "We don't really know where things are right now."

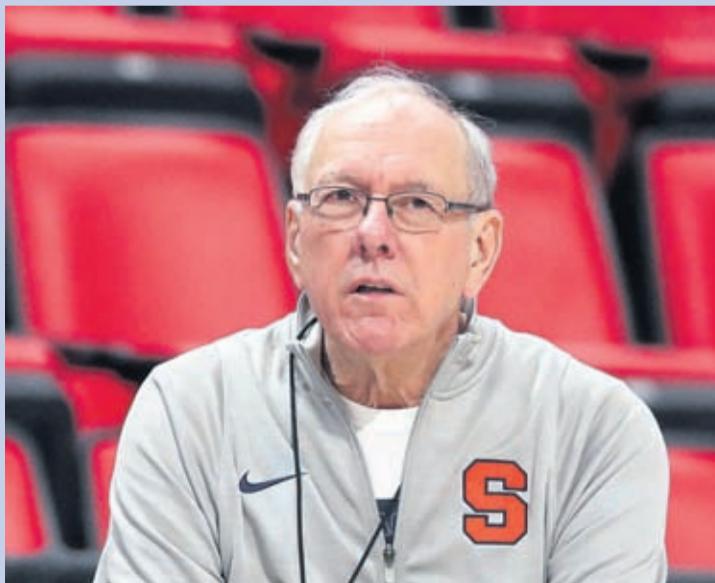
Apparently, neither does

Williamson. And now, a month after the freshman star swatted away questions about the prudence of risking injury by playing — Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen had suggested he'd be better off shutting it down for the year — that debate is sure to be reignited. Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell, who played in college at Louisville, said on Twitter that "something has to change" in the wake of the injury. "Again let's remember all the money that went into this game.... and these players get none of it.... and now Zion gets hurt," he tweeted.

Williamson grabbed his right knee in pain after slipping awkwardly and falling when his left shoe fell apart as he planted hard while dribbling near the free throw line. The blue rubber sole ripped loose from the white shoe from the heel to the toes along the outside edge, with Williamson's foot coming all the way through the large gap. He walked off with a slight limp, but under his own power, before heading to the locker room with no shoes on his feet.

Nike said in a statement that it was "concerned" and wished Williamson a speedy recovery. It said it was "working to identify the issue." □

Syracuse coach Boeheim strikes, kills pedestrian on highway



In this March 15, 2018, file photo, Syracuse head coach Jim Boeheim watches during a practice for an NCAA men's college basketball tournament first-round game, in Detroit.

Associated Press

By JOHN KEKIS and MICHAEL HILL

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Longtime Syracuse basketball coach Jim Boeheim struck and killed a man standing along an interstate late Wednesday night as he tried to avoid hitting the man's disabled vehicle, police say.

Syracuse police say 51-year-old Jorge Jimenez was an occupant in a vehicle with three others when they lost control and hit a guardrail before midnight Wednesday on I-690 in Syracuse.

Boeheim struck Jimenez as he stood on the side

of the road while trying to avoid the vehicle in the middle of the highway. Jimenez was taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police said. "I am heartbroken that a member of our community died as the result of last night's accident," Boeheim said in a prepared statement. The 74-year-old Basketball Hall of Fame coach said he and his wife Juli "extend our deepest sympathies to the Jimenez family."

He said he would not comment further "out of respect for those involved."

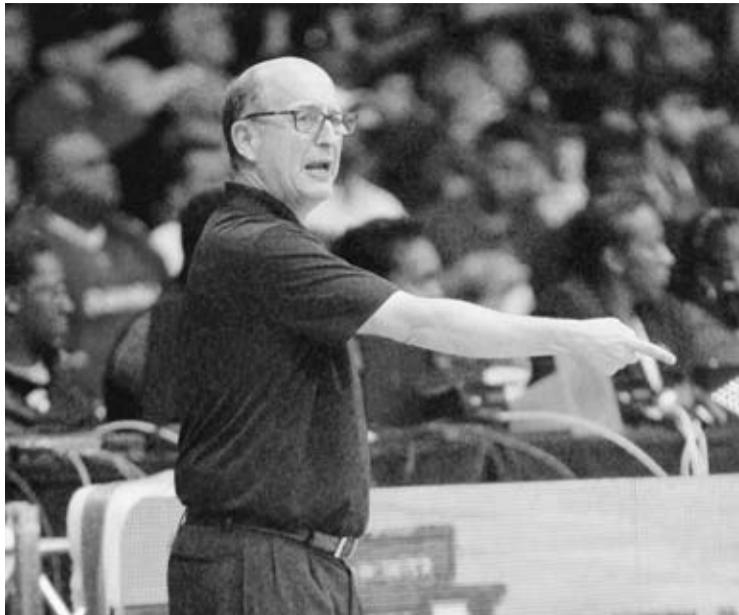
Police said Boeheim is co-

operating with the investigation.

"He stopped immediately and exited the vehicle," said Syracuse Sgt. Matthew Malinowski.

Police said sobriety tests administered to Boeheim and the unidentified driver of the other vehicle were negative for any signs of impairment. Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick said he has known Boeheim for 40 years and that the coach does not drink.

No tickets have been issued to Boeheim at this time and the investigation is continuing. □



In this Sept. 17, 2018, file photo, U.S. basketball coach Jeff Van Gundy speaks from the sidelines of the team's FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 qualifier game against Panama in Panama City.

Associated Press

Jeff Van Gundy on All-Star Game: Eliminate it

By TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Jeff Van Gundy has an idea on how to fix the NBA All-Star Game.

His plan: Eliminate it.

Van Gundy, the former NBA coach and now longtime television commentator for ABC and ESPN, said what he's seeing now from the game is embarrassing and "a bastardization of the game that is beautiful to watch." The teams picked by captains LeBron James and Giannis Antetokounmpo combined to attempt a record 167 3-pointers in Sunday night's game — and 96 of the 134 field goals in the game came off either 3s or dunks.

"You can be a Division III player like myself and be All-Star MVP," Van Gundy said. "All you have to do is drive in and shoot a layup."

Van Gundy coached in the 2000 All-Star game, his Eastern Conference team falling to Phil Jackson and the Western Conference 137-126. There was no shortage of alley-oops tried in that game, though Tim Duncan, Alonzo Mourning and Shaquille O'Neal spent plenty of time defending the rim against those lobs as well.

"I would name All-Stars, I would have All-Star weekend, they have all these things, introduce them ... the players are great, they should be applauded," Van Gundy said this week, while preparing to coach USA Basketball's team picked for the final two games of qualifying for this summer's FIBA World Cup in China. "But to take this game and shoot 160 3s, it's an embarrassment. It's an embarrassment."

Van Gundy said he doesn't need to see a game with Game 7, playoff-level intensity.

He just wants to see some effort.

"The equivalent would be like Major League Baseball, a guy hits the ball, you throw it to him at 70 mph because you're not trying," Van Gundy said. "And then you hit it and no one chases it and you just let a guy circle and score and you have unlimited runs. You've got to try."

Players, including James and National Basketball Players Association President Chris Paul, along with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver all said after the 192-182 game two years ago that the All-Star game had to be more competitive.

"Let's just say it: They don't want to play," Van Gundy said. "Adam said, 'It's got to be fixed.' There's nothing fixed." □



In this Oct. 5, 2018, file photo, then-Los Angeles Dodgers' Manny Machado celebrates his two-run home run against the Atlanta Braves during the first inning of Game 2 of a baseball National League Division Series, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Players finding payoffs are changing in baseball

By TIM DAHLBERG

AP Sports Columnist

Manny Machado's new \$300 million contract put a stop — at least temporarily — to a growing chorus of player complaints that major league teams were conspiring to do deep damage to the free agent market.

It did nothing, however, to change the new reality of baseball. And that's something players should be worrying about between now and 2021, when the current collective bargaining agreement expires and the threat of labor action looms.

No longer do major league executives reflexively chase the latest bauble on the market. Analytics that have changed the field of play have changed the front office, too.

"Markets change," commissioner Rob Manfred said the other day before Machado signed with the San Diego Padres. "We've had a lot of change in the game. People think about players differently. They analyze players differently. They negotiate differently."

Indeed they do. But things have changed so quickly that the players' union seems to have been taken

off guard. When players last negotiated a contract in 2016 the most pressing issues were more days off and private chefs in every clubhouse. With salaries rising every year, their attention was on work life issues. After a second straight season where owners expressed little interest in some free agents, though, the trends have set off some alarms among players and the players' union. There's increasing chatter about the possibility of trying to reopen the collective bargaining agreement to make some adjustments. Sure, Machado got a 10-year contract and Bryce Harper will get something similar. But those contracts are just for a few elite players, while others will remain unsigned or settle for far less. From the standpoint of owners the equation is simple: Why take the risk on long-term contracts for millions of dollars when there are replacement players available for the major league minimum of \$555,000?

Use two of them in a platoon and the numbers might be close enough to a Machado or Harper. Or load the bullpen with minimum wage arms and have

them throw as hard as they can for as long as they can and then bring in a new bunch.

"All veteran players of a certain age are being affected by this analysis, which is not just widespread but fairly consistent across most clubs," said former New York Mets general manager Sandy Alderson, now an Oakland Athletics senior adviser. "The math is the math."

That math is unsparing in baseball these days. A sport that always valued numbers has embraced new metrics like WAR (Wins Above Replacement) even more and front offices are using them to evaluate risk and reward in the free agent market.

Add in the higher luxury tax imposed in the latest collective bargaining agreement and high payroll clubs like the Red Sox, Dodgers and Yankees are watching every dollar they spend.

Still, it's hard not to laugh when Chicago Cubs owner Tom Ricketts — whose team is valued at \$2.9 billion by Forbes — opens spring training by saying his team didn't pursue any high priced free agents because there is no money to spend. □

Murray's mother says former Wimbledon champ could play again

By SEBASTIAN FEST, Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) —

Andy Murray is currently recovering from his hip surgery, and his mother thinks the two-time Wimbledon champion still has a chance of making a return. Murray announced last month at the Australian Open that he would compete in the season's first major but might never be able to play again. He lost in the first round in Melbourne and had hip resurfacing surgery about two weeks ago.

Judy Murray, Andy's mother and former coach, told The Associated Press that she doesn't think her son is done just yet.

"I don't think we know anything, for sure nobody does," Judy Murray said at the Rio Open, the biggest tennis tournament in South America. "But I know that he would do everything that he possibly can to give himself a chance to play again. "I think he had the same operation as Bob Bryan after the U.S. Open, and he was playing doubles again, at Australian Open. But doubles is a very differ-



In this file photo dated Sunday, July 7, 2013, Andy Murray of Britain, left, greets his mother Judy after defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia during the Men's singles final match at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London.

Associated Press

ent physical proposition as singles. I think, right now, (we have to) wait and see." When Andy Murray made his surprise announcement ahead of the Australian Open, he said he would at least like to keep playing until Wimbledon — the tournament he won in 2013 to become the first British male champion at the All England Club in 77 years. Murray won the Wimbledon title again in 2016, as well as winning one U.S.

Open title and two Olympic gold medals. He was also ranked No. 1 in the world for 41 weeks.

Judy Murray, speaking at the stylish Jockey Club after being invited to the ATP tournament, said she thinks her son is still struggling with the idea of never playing again. If he sees a chance to return, he will take it, she said. "I think he will, (but) I think he's aware that it might not be possible," Judy Murray said.

"He is a smart guy, he has a lot of interest in different things, he has a lot of options in life after tennis. But the most important thing is that he's free from the pain he's had for 20 months. He has a young family, you have to think about the quality of life for the rest of your life. Actually, that's the most important thing." Andy Murray has said that "overtraining" during his younger years may have led to the recent operation that included removing the damaged bone and cartilage within his right hip socket and replacing it with a metal shell. Judy Murray was coaching both of her sons during those early years, but she didn't necessarily agree that too much practice was the reason.

"Well, not too much," Judy Murray said. "You learn from your mistakes, both with Jamie and Andy we were learning as we went along, because nobody had done it from Scotland before. So, there was nobody to follow, nobody to give us advice."

Still, she did quite a job coaching her boys. Besides Andy reaching No. 1 and

winning Wimbledon, Jamie reached No. 1 in doubles and won a pair of mixed doubles titles at the All England Club, among others.

"They did amazing things," Judy Murray said. "Nobody could have ever having expected them to become No. 1 coming from a small town in the middle of Scotland." The highest point in her memory, however, came in the Davis Cup. Britain was facing Australia in the semifinals, the best-of-five series was being played in Glasgow, and both of her sons were on the team. "Andy played with Jamie, and we weren't sure if he's going to play the doubles, because of course he has to play singles on Friday and Sunday, and to play three matches in a row best of five sets is tough," Judy Murray said. "So we weren't sure until the last minute that he was going to play the doubles. And it was in Glasgow, in Scotland, where we live, where tennis is a very tiny sport, just 1 percent of the population plays tennis. Nobody would ever have expected us to have Grand Slam champions. □

2021 Tour de France race to start in Denmark

By JAN M. OLSEN
Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

(AP) — The Tour de France will start in Denmark in 2021, beginning with a ride in Copenhagen followed by two more stages around the country.

The opening stage on July 2 will be a 13-kilometer flat run around the capital.

"It is an honor to have the grand depart in Copenhagen," race director Christian Prudhomme said Thursday.

A 190-kilometer stage between Roskilde and Nyborg, a town on the island of Funen, will follow. That stage will include pedaling on the windy bridges that make up the Storebaelt rail-and-road link.

"The wind is very, very important for the race. It was important to have the



Danish Crown Prince Frederik speaks during a press conference on the Tour de France at Copenhagen City Hall, Thursday 21 February 2019. Danish Crown Prince Frederik speaks during a press conference on the Tour de France at Copenhagen City Hall, Thursday 21 February 2019.

Associated Press

finishing line close to the bridge," Prudhomme said. "Stage 2 is for sports enthusiasts."

The last stage before heading back to France will be in the hilly Jutland peninsula between the towns of

Vejle and Soenderborg. The contract for the 90 million kroner (\$13.7 million) Danish start was signed

Thursday by Prudhomme and Copenhagen Mayor Frank Jensen.

Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen, himself an avid cycling fan, called the Tour de France "the most iconic cycling race of all time."

Both Prudhomme and Loekke Rasmussen noted Denmark had been picked because of the country's interest in the race but also because many Danes bicycle to work and school every day. The Danish prime minister said ordinary people in Copenhagen bike "330 Tour de France races every day."

In 2011, the International Cycling Union held its Road World Championships in Copenhagen.

Other details of the 2021 Tour de France route were not disclosed. □

Mixed martial arts star Georges St-Pierre retires at 37

MONTREAL (AP) — Georges St-Pierre retired Thursday after a career in which he put mixed martial arts on the map in Canada and helped fuel the UFC's worldwide expansion.

The 37-year-old Canadian made the announcement at the Bell Centre. St-Pierre, a two-division champion, leaves with a record of 26-2-0 and a 13-fight winning streak.

"It takes a lot of discipline to become and stay champion," he said in a statement. "It also takes a lot of discipline to stop while still feeling that you're in the best physical and mental shape of your life. But I've always planned to leave the sport when I'm at the top and in good health."

He has fought just once since stepping away from the sport in late 2013 after nine straight welterweight



Canada's Georges St-Pierre announces his retirement from mixed martial arts during a press conference in Montreal, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

Associated Press

title defenses. But in November 2017 he dethroned middleweight champion Michael "The Count" Bisping in his comeback bout at UFC 217.

St-Pierre gave up the 185-pound crown a month later, citing concerns with ulcerative colitis.

Despite limited activity, he is eighth in the UFC's pound-

for-pound rankings. He was nominated for best fighter at the ESPY Awards in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2018.

He thanked family, fans and coaches as well as trainers, training partners, sponsors and agents. He also made it a point to laud his opponents.

"All of them are incredible athletes who brought out the best in me," he said. "I retire from competition with great pride at having had a positive impact on my sport. I intend to keep training and practicing martial arts for as long as I live and I look forward to watching the new generation of champions carry our sport into the future."

St-Pierre debuted on the big stage with a unanimous decision over Karo Parisyan in 2004. He won his first welterweight championship by knockout over Matt Hughes

in 2006. After losing the title to Matt Serra, he recaptured the belt by TKO in their rematch in Montreal.

"Georges has cemented his legacy as one of the pound-for-pound greatest fighters ever," UFC President Dana White said. "He beat all the top guys during his welterweight title reign and even went up a weight class to win the middleweight championship. He spent years as one of the biggest names in MMA and remains one of the best ambassadors for the sport."

In 2011, St-Pierre set the largest UFC gate outside the U.S. at more than \$12 million when he headlined UFC 129 at the Rogers Centre in Toronto. The crowd of 55,724 was the second-largest attendance in UFC history. □

DeRozan likely to receive warm welcome in Toronto return

Continued from Page 17

"If it's one of those long standing ovations, it's definitely going to be overwhelming," DeRozan said in a news conference at the Spurs' team hotel. "It's crazy when you get a whole arena on their feet just showing appreciation. I'm looking forward to it, to feeling the love."

Friday's game will be the first following the All-Star break for both teams. Toronto (43-16) has won six straight, and is one game behind Milwaukee for top spot in the Eastern Conference. San Antonio (33-26) beat Memphis in its final game before the break to stop a four-game slide. The Spurs are seventh in the West, nine games behind leaders Golden State.

There wasn't much love on offer when the Raptors visited the Spurs in January. Toronto forward Kawhi Leonard endured chants of "Traitor! Traitor!" and "Quitter! Quitter!" from the capacity crowd that adored

him during his seven seasons in San Antonio.

"It just felt like a road game, but more boos when I have the ball," Leonard said after the Raptors practiced Thursday. "Environments like that can only get us better, being able to have the fans up in their seats excited, wanting the team to lose, it just prepares us for the playoffs." Leaving Toronto last summer was difficult for DeRozan. Still a teenager when he was drafted by Toronto in 2009, he turned into an All-Star by 2014, building his game year after year. He left town as the franchise leader in points (13,296), field goals (4,716), free throws (3,539), and games (675). DeRozan compared the emotional wounds left by the end of his Raptors career to a breakup, albeit one with a happy ending.

"She moved on and I moved on," he joked. "Now we're both happy." Toronto coach Nick Nurse worked with DeRozan for five years in his role as



San Antonio Spurs guard DeMar DeRozan (10) looks to get past Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell (45) and to the basket during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019, in Salt Lake City. Utah won 125-105.

Associated Press

a Raptors assistant, and called him "the best dude ever." "He was easy to coach," Nurse said. "He was easy to talk to. And he was a great performer." DeRozan certainly performed when the Spurs routed the Raptors in January, recording 21 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double. It was the first home triple-double by a Spurs player

since Tim Duncan in 2003. The visit to Toronto also gives DeRozan the opportunity to compete against former teammate and friend Kyle Lowry, who missed the game in Texas because of a sore back.

"I'm looking forward to playing against him," DeRozan said. "Kyle gave me a sense of a different side of understanding basketball. I learned so much from

him being my point guard, being my best friend, just everything that came with that."

DeRozan said he misses plenty of things about Toronto, but not its winter weather. He conducted his news conference while wearing a fuzzy aviator hat and said he planned to stay in for the night, joking that he hoped Lowry would bring him some food. □

Google's Nest hub has a microphone it forgot to mention

By RACHEL LERMAN
AP Technology Writer

Google said Wednesday it forgot to mention that it included a microphone in its Nest Secure home alarm system, the latest privacy blub by one of the tech industry's leading collectors of personal information. The company said earlier this month that its voice assistant feature would be available on the system's Nest Guard, which controls home alarm sensors. But Google hadn't told consumers about the de-



In this Sept. 20, 2017, file photo the Nest Secure alarm system is seen on display during an event in San Francisco.

Associated Press

vice's built-in microphone when it began selling the

hubs in the fall of 2017. As recently as January , the product specs for the device made no mention of a microphone.

Google said in a statement that the omission was a mistake. "The on-device microphone was never intended to be a secret and should have been listed in the tech specs," it said. The microphone hasn't been active since launch, and people have to specifically enable it going forward, Google said. Business Insider first reported the microphone had been missing from the product's de-

scription. Google and other Internet companies are facing increasing scrutiny over their data collection practices. The forgotten microphone is not Google's first run-in with user privacy concerns.

An AP investigation last year found the company was tracking users' location information through its apps and search services, even if users turned the feature off.

And in 2010, Google admitted it had accidentally collected some internet activity from open Wi-Fi networks using its Street View cars.□



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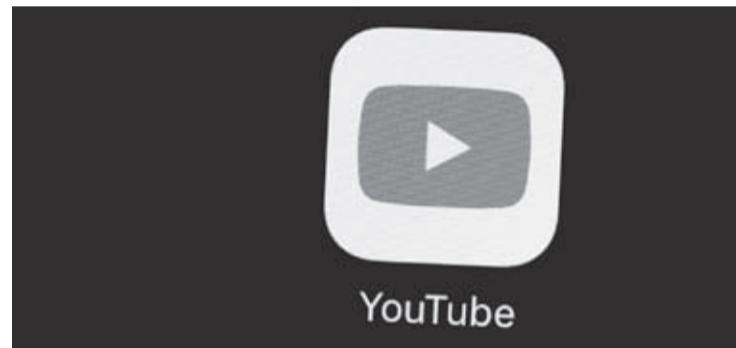
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This Oct. 20, 2015, file photo, shows signage outside Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

Associated Press

Google to end forced arbitration for all worker disputes

RACHEL LERMAN
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google said Thursday it will no longer require that its workers settle disputes with the company through arbitration, responding to months of pressure from employees.

The change will take effect March 21 and will apply to current and future employees. Employees that have settled past disputes won't be able to reopen their cases. Google said last year it would end forced arbitration for sexual harassment and assault cases, and Thursday expanded that practice to all worker disputes. Google's parent company, Mountain View, California-based Alphabet Inc., has its nearly 100,000 employees. The updated practices only apply to Google employees, and employees of Google projects such as Deep Mind and Access.

Other Alphabet subsidiaries, such as Waymo, are not included. Mandatory arbitration requires employees to settle their disputes with the company privately and outside of court. The practice, widespread in U.S. employment contracts, can lend itself to secrecy and has faced criticism recently.

Google workers who staged a walk out late last year have continued to press the tech giant to drop forced arbitration requirements. Protest organizers commended Google for Thursday's announcement, but wrote in a Medium post that they would not officially celebrate until the changes went live in employee agreements.

Google won't make all employees re-sign their work contracts, it said, but will post the policy change internally and update its contracts for new employees.□



This March 20, 2018 file photo shows the YouTube app on an iPad in Baltimore.

Associated Press

Nestle, AT&T pull YouTube ads over pedophile concerns

By RACHEL LERMAN and MAE ANDERSON

AP Technology Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Several companies, including AT&T and Nestle, are pulling advertisements from YouTube over concerns about inappropriate comments on videos of children.

A video from a popular YouTuber and a report from Wired showed that pedophiles have made unseemly comments on innocuous videos of kids. The comments reportedly included timestamps that showed where kids innocently bared body parts.

YouTube says it disabled comments on tens of millions of videos and deleted offending accounts and channels.

Nestle and Fortnite maker Epic Games say they paused ads on YouTube while the company works on the issue. AT&T says it has removed ads until YouTube can "protect our brand from offensive content of any kind."

YouTube has faced advertiser boycotts in the past, including a widespread boycott in early 2017. Since then YouTube has made efforts to be more transparent about how it deals with offensive comments and videos on its site.

But the latest flap shows how much of an ongoing problem offensive content continues to be, said eMarketer video analyst Paul Verna. □

Stocks head lower, threatening to break a winning streak

By ALEX VEIGA
Associated Press

U.S. stocks headed lower in midday trading Thursday, putting the S&P 500 index on pace for just its fourth decline this month.

The losses were widespread, with health care stocks, banks and energy companies accounting for much of the decline. CVS Health dropped 2.4 percent, while Morgan Stanley lost 1.2 percent. Oil and natural gas explorer Concho Resources slid 5.8 percent.

A mixed batch of reports on the U.S. economy helped keep markets in check, and investors are also waiting to see what comes out of high-level talks in Washington between U.S. and Chinese officials on their trade dispute.

Treasury yields rose, as prices for government bonds fell. The price of gold declined.

The pause for stocks follows a torrid rise since late December, and the S&P 500 index is still up 10.6 percent for 2019 so far. That's a bet-



In this Feb. 15, 2019, file photo trader John Panin works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.
Associated Press

ter performance than the index has turned in for three of the last four full years.

KEEPING SCORE: The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 81 points, or 0.3 percent, to 25,873 as of 12:15 p.m. Eastern Time. The benchmark S&P 500 index, which has risen for the past three weeks, dropped 0.3

percent, while the Nasdaq composite lost 0.2 percent. Major European indexes were mostly higher.

THE QUOTE: Some traders appear to be taking some profits now, given stocks rebounded strongly in recent weeks following a steep sell-off in the last three months of 2018, said Erik

Wytenus, global investment specialist at J.P. Morgan Private Bank.

"Markets need a little bit of an opportunity to breathe," he said. "We definitely have seen some market participants lightening up some risk, given the size of that bounce back, because any way you slice it,

we're late in the (economic) cycle."

TRADE TALKS: The U.S. and China resumed high-levels talks Thursday aimed at easing a trade standoff that has unnerved global investors and clouded the outlook for the world economy.

The world's two biggest economies are locked in a trade war that President Donald Trump started over allegations that China deploys predatory tactics to try to overtake U.S. technological dominance. Beijing's unfair tactics, trade analysts agree, include pressuring American companies to hand over trade secrets and in some cases stealing them outright.

The Trump administration has warned it will escalate its import taxes on \$200 billion in Chinese goods from 10 percent to 25 percent if the two sides haven't reached a resolution by March 2. But Trump in recent days has signaled a willingness to extend the deadline if negotiators are making progress. □

US home sales tumbled 1.2 percent in January



In this Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019, photo a price reduced for sale sign sit in front of a home in north Dallas. On Thursday, Feb. 21, the National Association of Realtors reports on sales of existing homes in January.

Associated Press

By JOSH BOAK
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. home sales fell 1.2 percent in January to their worst pace in more than three years, as persistent affordability problems have put a harsh chill in the real estate market.

The National Association of Realtors said Thursday that sales of existing homes

declined 1.2 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.94 million last month, the slowest sales rate since November 2015. During the past 12 months, sales have plunged 8.5 percent. Would-be homebuyers are increasingly priced out of the market as years of climbing prices and strained inventories have made ownership too

costly. A solid job market has done little to boost sales, with the sharpest annual sales declines being among homes priced less than \$250,000.

"January's weak sales pace was likely the result of the lingering effects of stock market volatility and lower consumer confidence toward the end of 2018," said Joel Kan, associate vice president of industry surveys and forecasts at the Mortgage Bankers Association. "Much of the January

decrease was in the lower price tiers, which also tends to be where inventory is the tightest."

Homes are sitting on the market longer, causing inventories to rise. Properties stayed on the market for an average of 49 days, up from 42 a year ago. The number of homes for sale has risen to 1.59 million from 1.52 million a year ago, yet inventories are still tight compared to historic averages. The average interest charged on a 30-year,

fixed rate mortgage this week was 4.35 percent this week, down from an average as high as roughly 5 percent last year, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac. □



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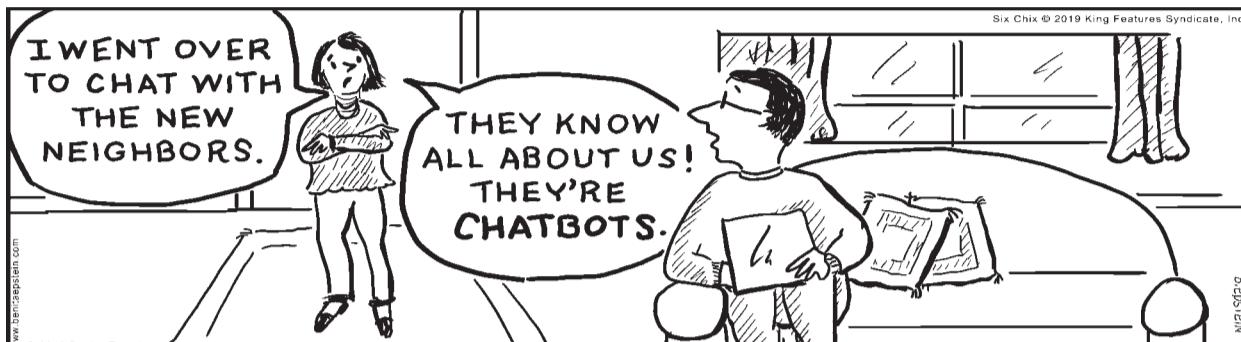
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Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	9			7		2		
1		7			2	5	3	
				7	6			
2				8		5		
4					2		8	
5	3							
8	1	6			9	7		
6			4			3		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

2/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

5	9	8	2	3	6	1	4	7
4	2	7	5	1	9	8	6	3
1	3	6	8	4	7	5	9	2
6	4	2	7	5	1	9	3	8
9	5	3	4	8	2	6	7	1
8	7	1	9	6	3	4	2	5
3	8	5	6	2	4	7	1	9
7	1	4	3	9	8	2	5	6
2	6	9	1	7	5	3	8	4

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2/22

ACROSS

- 1 Obey
- 5 Exhibit
- 9 Not at all ruddy
- 13 Wear away
- 15 Juicy fruit
- 16 "Queen for ___" of old TV
- 17 Immigrates
- 18 Weave together
- 20 ___ rampage; rushing wildly about
- 21 Corolla or Civic
- 23 ___ up; joined forces
- 24 Weight reveler
- 26 Popular pet
- 27 Summarizes
- 29 Tears to bits
- 32 Came up
- 33 Tribal pole
- 35 Corn cob
- 37 Flying insect
- 38 ___ up; accumulated
- 39 Primary color
- 40 Greek letter
- 41 Wool bearer
- 42 Bit of a jigsaw puzzle
- 43 Spring celebration
- 45 Came in second
- 46 Split ___ soup
- 47 Fight like a knight
- 48 Reverberates
- 51 Commercials
- 52 "Much ___ About Nothing"
- 55 Quack
- 58 Flowed back
- 60 Metal corrosion
- 61 Slangy refusal
- 62 Dinner course
- 63 Thurman & others
- 64 Golf shop purchase
- 65 Cincinnati team

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/22/19

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

M	P	H	B	E	L	O	W	S	P	A	T
R	E	A	D	O	L	I	V	E	A	L	S
S	A	V	E	G	A	V	E	L	B	O	A
R	E	C	L	I	N	E	R	S	O	W	N
L	I	E	D	H	O	T					
O	C	E	A	N	S						
S	H	A	R	K	T	R	I	A	L	R	O
W	A	R	T	R	I	L	O	W	N	A	C
C	A	R	E	M	O	U	R	W	A	C	O
A	F	T	L	E	E	S	S	A	T	A	N
R	E	H	E	R	S	B	A	R	E	L	Y
N	B	C	A	L	F						
F	L	E	A	I	M	P	O	R	T	A	N
L	O	A	M	E	F	E	A	S	T	R	E
O	G	R	E	U	N	I	T	E	E	A	C
W	E	L	L	U	N	A	R	T	K	O	

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2/22/19

- 3 Canadian province
- 4 Ike's monogram
- 5 Steeple
- 6 Female bird
- 7 Cereal grain
- 8 Miserable
- 9 Roof of the mouth
- 10 Actor Sandler
- 11 Mantilla fabric
- 12 Open___; watchful
- 14 Flea
- 19 Provide with fresh weapons
- 22 Gore & his dad
- 25 Money
- 27 Skateboarder's incline
- 28 Uneven
- 29 Staircase piece
- 30 Tasty
- 31 Spaghetti topper
- 32 Bleachers level
- 34 Bullring cheer
- 35 Group of whales
- 38 Game bird
- 39 Unfair slant
- 41 Iron alloy
- 42 Adders' signs
- 44 Soccer & softball
- 45 Seymour & Pauley
- 46 Neutral color
- 49 Buddy
- 50 ___ crush on; is smitten with
- 53 Deceased
- 54 Likelihood
- 56 Part of a sock
- 57 As hairy as an
- 59 Saloon

Classifieds

Halley Time Travel

Divi Village
1 BR WK # 8 & 9
21 & 25 weeks remain
\$9000 each

Divi links Golf
1 BR WK# 8 & 9
27 weeks remain
\$9000 each

Eagle Resort & Casino
1 BR WK # 5,6,7,8
Ground floor \$7000 each
1 BR WK 7 & 8 \$7000 each

Dutch Village
1 BR WK 8 \$8500
24 weeks remain

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4 Bedroom , 3 Bath
Swimming pool \$350K

Marriott Ocean Club
Platinum
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2 BR Ocean View \$16,000
2 BR Ocean Front \$24,000

Aruba Divi Phoenix
1 BR WK # 8 \$2000
23 February 2 March 2019

Aruba Divi Phoenix
2 BR Penthouse WK # 11 & 12
Building 9 the 7th floor
27 weeks remain \$25K each
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1050 m2 \$110.000 american dollars

House for sale

Opal
3 bedroom , 2 bath \$ 325K

Costa Linda Beach Resorts
2 BR wk #10 3rd floor
Light House view \$25K

Marriott Surf Club
2 BR Garden Vie w \$14,000
2 BR Ocean View \$ 15,000
2 BR Ocean Side \$16,000
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 27,000
3 BR Ocean View \$26,000

La Cabana Beach & Casino
1 Br Wk # 11 &12
4th floor pool/Ocean view
Sunday check in \$ 18, 000 both
Divi Village
Studio WK # 6
22 weeks remain \$8000

Renaissance Suites
1 BR WK # 9 \$9500
4th Floor Harbor/Ocean View
Aruba Divi Phoenix
Studio wk # 9
building 6
5th floor \$9000
30 weeks remain

Aruba Divi Phoenix
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With 29 weeks remain \$ 16K
1 BR WK # 10 biulding #8
6th floor 28 weeks remain \$16K

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Red Cross	582 2219

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Hurricanes create natural climate change labs in Puerto Rico

By DANICA COTO

Associated Press

EL YUNQUE, Puerto Rico

(AP) — The hurricanes that pounded Puerto Rico in 2017, blasting away most of its forest cover, may give scientists clues to how the world will respond to climate change and increasingly severe weather.

Researchers at El Yunque, the only tropical rain forest overseen by the U.S. Forest Service, are running controlled studies on how plants respond to higher temperatures combined — since the cataclysmic blow from Hurricane Maria — with severe weather.

Not far away, another group is looking at how hurricanes affect the forest environment.

"It's a once-in-a-century opportunity to look at these two aspects of climate change together," said Tana Wood, a research ecologist with the Forest Service.

Wood heads a team testing how plants themselves respond to higher temperatures.

The 2017 hurricane season, with Maria following a lesser blow from Hurricane Irma, has given them a chance as well to see how storms affect the recovery of ecosystems already under stress, a key concern in the Caribbean, where scientists say warmer temperatures could lead to more intense hurricanes.

On a recent trek to the site, Wood brushed aside thick branches and leaves the size of laptops as she made her way to three plots surrounded by infrared panels that heat the air and soil by 4 degrees Celsius (7 degrees Fahrenheit). The vegetation there was shorter and a bit browner

compared with the three unheated control plots. The warmed plots run on

studying nutrients and microbes in the artificially warmed plots of land,

Overall, global carbon dioxide emissions have increased 55 percent in the



In this Feb. 13, 2019 photo, interns Carolina May, left, and Rosanise Odell, collect water samples from one of the warming plots inside the El Yunque tropical rainforest, in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico.

Associated Press

480 volts of electricity, and while the lines are isolated from the soil, the scientists use insulated boots to avoid getting electrocuted in case of an accident.

Nearby, plant physiologist Rob Tunison clamped what looked like a small compact mirror around a dark green leaf to measure photosynthesis, spending 30 minutes to an hour per leaf. Wood said they are looking at how temperatures affect basic processes such as photosynthesis — by which plants transform sunlight into energy while absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing that gas along with oxygen into the atmosphere — as well as how soils respond.

The researchers are also

keeping sending frozen samples to a lab in California for analysis.

Knowledge about tropical plants and soils could eventually be plugged into models to determine how vastly broader ecosystems respond to changes.

"We are also able to look at the potential for tropical plants and soils to acclimate to consistently warmer conditions over time," Wood said.

Tropical forests play a key role in recycling carbon dioxide, and they store about a third of the world's carbon, she said.

They also help generate rainfall across the world by releasing water vapor, which in turn creates clouds.

"Anything that happens in these systems can have an effect on the world's climate," she said.

U.S., British and international climate agencies reported this month that 2018 was the fourth-warmest year on record, and global emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide saw their largest spike in seven years.

past two decades, and Earth has warmed on average about two-thirds of a degree Celsius, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

British meteorologists said in early February that the next five years could see record-breaking temperatures. Scientists expect the world this year will spew 40.9 billion tons (37.1 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide, up from 39.8 billion tons (36.2 billion metric tons) last year, according to studies by the Global Carbon Project.

Kim Cobb, a climate scientist at Georgia Institute of Technology who is not involved in the experiments at El Yunque, said she was not aware of any other long-term warming experiments in tropical rainforests.

"What will happen at their site is highly uncertain, because the rainforest itself controls so many aspects of the regional water cycle. It's not a system that we can model extremely well today, let alone under climate change scenarios," Cobb said.

"But there is little doubt that these kinds of long-term monitoring sites are extremely valuable in advancing our understanding of the water and carbon cycle, and how they might change with climate change."

The \$3 million project, partly funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, is in its fourth year and Wood said she hopes it can run indefinitely.

Scientists took a one-year hiatus after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico on Sept. 20, 2017, so they could separate the effect of warming from the effect of the storm, which caused more than \$100 billion in damage and toppled trees like dominoes.

A couple of miles from Woods' experiment, scientists including those from the International Institute of Tropical Forestry are looking at how hurricanes affect the tropical forest. They began by trimming away the canopy leaves above patches of forest to mimic the effects of a storm.

They hired arborists to cut tree branches and spread them across the forest floor to study how light and water move through the changed ecosystem and the impact that the debris has on soil microbes. They also monitor cloud base heights to get a sense of how changes could affect rainfall.

Maria suddenly gave them a real-life test.

"It poses a lot of challenges but a lot of opportunities to move the science forward," said Grizelle Gonzalez, a project leader.

The experiments are expected to continue for several years, barring any interruptions from storms as the Caribbean prepares for another Atlantic hurricane season that starts June 1.

Cobb, the global warming scientist, praised the ongoing experiments.

"It is well worth the effort," she said.

"The raw beauty of these environments is really only matched by their immense scientific potential." □

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Get hip to this: Paris wants Olympic debut for breakdance

By JOHN LEICESTER

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — From the streets of New York to the Olympic podium: Breakdancing's conquest of the globe seemingly knows no bounds.

Getting hip to breakdancing's appeal with young audiences, organizers of the 2024 Paris Olympics want the dance sport that spread from New York in the 1970s to become a medal event at the games. The final decision on which events make the cut will be made by the International Olympic Committee after the 2020 Tokyo Games. But simply being proposed on Thursday by Paris for an Olympic debut in 2024 was hailed by breakers as a milestone that will boost breakdancing's global footprint and its acceptance as a bona fide competitive sport.

"It's a victory for us. Even if it goes no further, we'll still have won," said Mounir Biba, one of the foremost breakdancers in France, which is a stronghold of the sport.

Also on Paris' wish-list are climbing, surfing and skateboarding — which will all



In this file picture taken with a long time exposure on March 12, 2017, Jannis Bednarzik performs during the German Breakdance Championships in Magdeburg, Germany.

make their Olympic debuts at the 2020 Tokyo Games. The head of the Paris organizing committee, Tony Estanguet, announced the selection, disappointing other sports that lobbied for a spot, including karate and squash.

Paris' proposal is the four sports together enter 248 athletes, evenly split between men and women.

Room would have to be made elsewhere in the program to stay within the IOC's ceiling of 10,500 Olympians in total.

In competitive breakdancing, also called breaking, breakers — alone or in teams — face off against each other in "battles," taking turns to show off an array of imaginative, acrobatic and improvised

moves to a DJ's beats, watched by a judging panel that picks the winner. Breaking featured at the Youth Olympic Games last year.

"There's simply no doubt about the athletic aspects of the discipline," said Biba, fielding numerous questions at the Paris announcement about how breaking qualifies as a sport.

Associated Press

"I defy Cristiano Ronaldo to do just one of my movements," he said. Organizers noted the proposed sports have broad appeal to young people, large and active audiences on social media and, with skateboarding and breaking in particular, an urban base. Another advantage for Paris as it seeks to satisfy IOC efforts for less wasteful games is the four sports shouldn't need large and complex new venues.

Estanguet said Paris organizers are also aiming to make the 2024 Games more participative than ever, by allowing members of the public to test themselves against the performances of Olympic athletes, in the real world or virtually. That could include organizing a public marathon on the same route the Olympians run on, and on the same day. Organizers also are exploring connected technology that might allow spectators to virtually compete against Olympians. That could include riding a stationary bike at home and comparing that performance against those of cyclists in the Olympic races. □

'The Uninhabitable Earth' explores climate doomsday

By KEVIN BEGOS
Associated Press

"The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming" (Tim Duggan Books), by David Wallace-Wells.

The science is clear: Massive fossil fuel use by humans is raising temperatures in the oceans and air, the seas are rising, and we aren't building nearly enough green energy to slow the process.

But does preaching global doom inspire change, or just resignation? The worth of "The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming" by David Wallace-Wells hinges on that question.

"The Uninhabitable Earth" originated as a long essay for New York magazine in 2017, and the book repeats the same formula. Wallace-Wells argues that it is

past time to be very afraid about the devastation that humans and ecosystems will suffer.

Some scientists criticized the extreme tone of the magazine piece, but David Archer, a respected climate expert at the University of Chicago, said then that Wallace-Wells "is not wrong, wildly misleading, or out of bounds of the discussion we should be having about climate change."

But if the book is justified in discussing worst-case scenarios, Wallace-Wells repeatedly confuses the message by bouncing between alarm and caution. There's the title, yet soon we're told that "it is unlikely that climate change will render the planet truly uninhabitable." He writes that the Syr-

The
Uninhabitable
Earth
Life After Warming
David
Wallace-Wells

This cover image released by Tim Duggan Books shows "The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming," by David Wallace-Wells.

Associated Press

ian civil war was "inflamed by climate change and drought," but later adds

that scientists say it is "not exactly fair to say the conflict is the result of warming."

Books should also have deeper narratives than magazine pieces, and "The Uninhabitable Earth" doesn't. Wallace-Wells speculates about climate doomsday from every possible angle, but says little about the tremendous global progress in reducing wind or solar power costs. A single wonky chapter on the benefits, costs and challenges of bringing a green energy revolution to New York City would have been welcome, and timely.

Generals motivate troops by searching for ways to win, not by telling everyone they are doomed to die. The book suffers from unnecessary hyperbole,

too. Wallace-Wells loses credibility with claims that "global warming has improbably compressed into two generations the entire story of human civilization" and that three or more degrees of warming "would unleash suffering beyond anything that humans have ever experienced through many millennia." One wonders where Wallace-Wells places the Bubonic plague and deaths from malaria, typhoid, AIDS, starvation, war, the Holocaust and the like.

Yet the time to slow climate change is running out, so perhaps the tone of "The Uninhabitable Earth" is a necessary response. If the book inspires a new generation of climate activists, more power to Wallace-Wells. □

What will win best picture? It's a maddeningly close race

By JAKE COYLE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On a year where one of the lead Oscar contenders is titled "The Favourite," the 91st Academy Awards lack a clear front runner.

Normally a fairly predictable process with one or two favorites, this year's best picture race has been maddeningly unclear, almost devious in its contradictions. The guild awards, usually a road map to the Oscars, have spread their honors around like never before. Not one of the top prizes from the leading guilds has lined up with another.

The producers went for "Green Book," the directors chose "Roma," the actors voted for "Black Panther," the editors chose "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "The Favourite," the cinematographers elected "Cold War" and the writers picked "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" and "Eighth Grade," a movie the academy snubbed entirely.

The inconsistency has befuddled onlookers. Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows Adam Driver, left, and John David Washington in a scene from "BlacKkKlansman."

called it "uncharted territory." Deadline suggested it is "one of the closest races in academy history."

Oscar balloting concluded Tuesday night. With days to go before show time Sunday, here's a rundown of the contenders and why each one has reason to hope.

ROMA: Many think this is Netflix's Oscar to lose, and, boy, do they want to win it. Alfonso Cuaron's black-and-white drama has some major dings against it. Most notably it was entirely overlooked by the Screen Actors Guild.

(All but two films in the last 20 years have needed a SAG ensemble nod to win best picture.) But it remains the critics' choice (both New York and Los Angeles critics groups named it best film), and it won at both the Directors Guild Awards and the BAFTAs.

Its 10 nominations evidence widespread esteem for "Roma," including two unexpected acting nods (Yalitza Aparicio, Marina de Tavira). Some prominent academy members (like Steven Spielberg) have said the Emmys are the proper place for Netflix films. But "Roma," Netflix's first best-picture nominee, may have turned the tide. It would be doubly historic: "Roma" would be the first foreign-language best-picture winner.

GREEN BOOK: Peter Farrelly's interracial road trip drama seems to be the strongest challenger to "Roma." It won at both the Golden Globes and the Producers Guild Awards, which, like the Oscars, use a preferential ballot. But no movie

has been more dogged by criticism. While some see a snappy, feel-good buddy movie, others see an outdated and inauthentic set-up that trades on racial stereotypes. In a close race, can such a polarizing film win? "Green Book," so often compared to 1989's best picture-winning "Driving Miss Daisy," may be exactly the kind of movie that once won best picture. But the film academy's membership has in recent years diversified and grown more international.

THE FAVOURITE: Yorgos Lanthimos' period romp comes tied with "Roma" for the most nominations and yet it has few assured wins. It won seven awards at the BAFTAs (where "Roma" ultimately took the top award). As a British period drama, "The Favourite" has the look of a traditional Oscar winner but gleefully inverts and subverts typical traits of the genre — making it kind of a perfect Academy Awards Trojan horse.

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY: Critics don't like it. Some say it sanitizes Freddie Mercury's homosexuality. And its director, Bryan Singer, was fired mid-production and is now facing (and denying) numerous allegations of sexual misconduct. These are not the normal ingredients for a best-picture

contender. And yet "Bohemian Rhapsody" abides. Not only that, Singer's biopic is a massive hit, especially abroad, with more than \$850 million in ticket sales worldwide. It won not just best picture, drama, at the Globes, but took top honors at the ACE Eddie Awards as the best edited drama. Were "Bohemian Rhapsody" to win, some would slam it as the worst best-picture winner ever. Fans would simply sing "We Are the Champions."

A STAR IS BORN: Something went amiss for the once-presumed front-runner. Bradley Cooper's remake (also a box-office hit with \$423 million globally) has been nominated just about everywhere and yet has gone home with little, besides awards for its music. It still scored seven Oscar nominations, but not since 1934 has a movie without either a directing or editing nod won best picture. No amount of Cooper cameos at Lady Gaga concerts seems able to save it. Also not helping: only two remakes have ever won best picture: 1959's "Ben-Hur" and 2006's "The Departed."

BLACK PANTHER: First the bad news. Only once before has a movie with no other major nominations won best picture, and that was "Wings" in 1927, when they were giving out two top awards (the other went to "Sunrise"). The academy tried to bring back that best-picture dichotomy for this Oscars, only to abandon plans for a best popular film category that "Black Panther" would have likely won.

But Ryan Coogler's Marvel epic, the first superhero movie ever nominated for best picture, is unique in many ways. It's the year's biggest domestic hit with more than \$700 million in North America where it was received as a cultural milestone. It also triumphed at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. A best-picture win wouldn't be the first time "Black Panther" made history. □

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HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD
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MON-THU 4:15 | 6:30 | 8:45
FRI 4:15 | 6:30 | 8:45 | 11:45
SAT 2:00 | 4:15 | 6:30 | 8:45
SUN 2:00 | 4:15 | 6:30 | 8:45
SPANISH SAT-SUN 2:05 [PG]

VIGGO MORTENSEN | MAHERSHALA ALI
GREEN BOOK
MON-FRI 3:50 | 6:00 | SAT-SUN 3:20 | 4:00
MON-SUN 6:35 [VIP] [PG-13]

DWAYNE JOHNSON | FLORENCE PUGH
FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY
MON-THU 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:40
FRI 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:40
SAT 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:40
SUN 2:20 | 4:40 | 7:00 | 9:20 | 11:40
[PG-13]

TARAJI P. HENDERSON | TRACY MORGAN
WHAT MEN WANT
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THU & SUN 6:50 | 8:40
FRI-SAT 6:50 | 8:40 | 11:10
MON-THU & SUN 4:25 | 9:30 | 12:00
FRI 4:25 | 9:30 | 12:00
SAT 1:55 | 4:25 | 9:30 | 12:00
SUN 1:55 | 4:25 | 9:30
[VIP] [R] [PG]

CHRIS PRATT | ELIZABETH BANKS
LEGION
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-FRI 5:00
SAT-SUN 2:40 | 5:00
[PG]

JESSICA ROTHE | RUBY MODINE
HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THU & SUN 7:20 | 9:35
FRI-SAT 7:20 | 9:35 | 11:50 [PG-13]

LIAM NEESON | LAURA DERN
COLD PURSUIT
MON-THU & SUN 4:20 | 9:20
FRI-SAT 4:20 | 9:20 | 11:50 [R]

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'Empire' actor charged with making false police report

By DON BABWIN

Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett was charged Wednesday with making a false police report when he said he was attacked in downtown Chicago by two men who hurled racist and anti-gay slurs and looped a rope around his neck, police said.

Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said prosecutors charged Smollett with felony disorderly conduct, an offense that could bring one to three years in prison and force the actor to pay for the cost of the investigation into his report of a Jan. 29 beating.

Authorities were trying to get in touch with Smollett's attorneys to "negotiate a reasonable surrender," Guglielmi said. That could involve the actor, who is black and gay, turning himself in to a Chicago police station.

Police did not have a time frame for how long the actor would be given.

"We are trying to be diplomatic and reasonable, and we're hoping he does the same," Guglielmi said.

The charges emerged on the same day that detectives and two brothers who were earlier deemed suspects testified before a grand jury. Smollett's attorneys met with prosecutors and police, but it was unknown what they discussed or whether Smollett attended the meeting.

In a statement, attorneys Todd Pugh and Victor Henderson said Smollett "enjoys the presumption of innocence, particularly when there has been an investigation like this one where information, both true and false, has been repeatedly leaked."

The announcement of the charges followed a flurry of activity in recent days, including lengthy interviews of the brothers by authorities, a search of their home and their release after police cleared them.

Investigators have not said what the brothers told detectives or what evidence

detectives collected. But it became increasingly clear that serious questions had

potential role in the attack started with reports that he had not fully cooperated

prosecutors, not the grand jury. The police spokesman said the brothers appeared

announced, there was little reaction from celebrities online.

Former Cook County prosecutor Andrew Weisberg said judges rarely throw defendants in prison for making false reports, opting instead to place them on probation, particularly if they have no prior criminal record.

Smollett has a record — one that concerns giving false information to police when he was pulled over on suspicion of driving under the influence. According to records, he was also charged with false impersonation and driving without a license. He later pleaded no contest to a reduced charge and took an alcohol education and treatment program.

Another prospective problem is the bill someone might receive after falsely reporting a crime that prompted a nearly month-long investigation, including the collection and review of hundreds of hours of surveillance video.

Weisberg recently represented a client who was charged with making a false report after surveillance video discredited her account of being robbed by three men at O'Hare Airport.

For an investigation that took only a single day, his client had to split restitution of \$8,400, Weisberg said. In Smollett's case, "I can imagine that this would be easily into the hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Earlier this week, Chicago's top prosecutor, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, announced that she had recused herself from the investigation.

Her office explained Wednesday that Foxx made the decision "out of an abundance of caution" because of conversations she had with one of Smollett's family members just after the report. When the relative expressed concerns about the case, Foxx "facilitated a connection" between the family member and detectives, according to a statement. □



In this May 20, 2016 file photo, actor and singer Jussie Smollett attends the "Empire" FYC Event in Los Angeles.

arisen about Smollett's account — something police signaled Friday when they announced a "significant shift in the trajectory" of the probe after the brothers were freed.

Smollett, who plays a gay character on the hit Fox television show, said he was attacked as he was walking home from a Subway sandwich shop. He said the masked men beat him, made derogatory comments and yelled "This is MAGA country" — an apparent reference to President Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again" — before fleeing.

Earlier Wednesday, Fox Entertainment and 20th Century Fox Television issued a statement saying Smollett "continues to be a consummate professional on set" and that his character is not being written off the show. The series is shot in Chicago and follows a black family as they navigate the ups and downs of the recording industry.

The studio's statement followed reports that Smollett's role was being slashed amid the police investigation.

Whispers about Smollett's

with police and word that detectives in a city bristling with surveillance cameras could not find video of the attack.

Detectives did find and release images of two people they said they wanted to question and last week picked up the brothers at O'Hare Airport as they returned from Nigeria. Police questioned the men and searched their apartment. The brothers, who were identified by their attorney as Abimbola "Abel" and Olabinjo "Ola" Osundairo, were held for nearly 48 hours on suspicion of assaulting Smollett.

The day after they were released, police said the men provided information that had "shifted the trajectory of the investigation," and detectives requested another interview with Smollett.

Police said one of the men had appeared on "Empire," and Smollett's attorneys said one of the men is the actor's personal trainer, whom he hired to help get him physically ready for a music video. The actor released his debut album, "Sum of My Music," last year.

Smollett was charged by

Associated Press

Future rabbis plant with Palestinians, sow rift with Israel

By ISABEL DEBRE

Associated Press

AT-TUWANI, West Bank (AP)

— Young American rabbinical students are doing more than visiting holy sites, learning Hebrew and poring over religious texts during their year abroad in Israel.

In a stark departure from past programs focused on strengthening ties with Israel and Judaism, the new crop of rabbinical students is reaching out to the Palestinians. The change reflects a divide between Israeli and American Jews that appears to be widening.

On a recent winter morning, Tyler Dratch, a 26-year-old rabbinical student at Hebrew College in Boston, was among some two dozen Jewish students planting olive trees in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani in the southern West Bank. The only Jews that locals typically see are either Israeli soldiers or ultranationalist settlers. "Before coming here and doing this, I couldn't speak intelligently about Israel," Dratch said. "We're saying that we can take the same religion settlers use to commit violence in order to commit justice, to make peace."

Dratch, not wanting to be mistaken for a settler, covered his Jewish skullcap with a baseball cap. He followed the group down a rocky slope to see marks that villagers say settlers left last month: "Death to Arabs" and "Revenge" spray-painted in Hebrew on boulders and several uprooted olive trees, their stems severed from clumps of dirt.

This year's student program also includes a tour of the flashpoint West Bank city of Hebron, a visit to an Israeli military court that prosecutes Palestinians and a meeting with an activist from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, which is blockaded by Israel.

The program is run by "T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights," a U.S.-based network of rabbis and cantors.

Most of T'ruah's membership, and all students in



In this Friday, Jan. 25, 2019 photo, American rabbinical students take a group photo, with the village of Attuwani in the background, during a day planting olive trees, near Hebron in the West Bank.

the Israel program, are affiliated with the Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative movements — liberal streams of Judaism that represent the majority of American Jews. These movements are marginalized in Israel, where rabbis from the stricter Orthodox stream dominate religious life. The T'ruah program, now in its seventh year, is meant to supplement students' standard curricular fare: Hebrew courses, religious text study, field trips and introductions to Jewish Israeli society. Though the program is optional, T'ruah says some 70 percent of the visiting American rabbinical students from the liberal branches of Judaism choose to participate.

The year-long program is split into one semester, focused on Israel's occupation of the West Bank, and another, on alleged human rights abuses inside Israel. T'ruah claims its West Bank encounters aren't one-off acts of community service, but experiences meant to be carried home and disseminated to future congregations.

"We want to propel them to action, so they invite their future rabbinate to work toward ending the occupation," said Rabbi Ian Chesir-Teran, T'ruah's

rabbinic educator in Israel. The group began its trip in the most Jewish of ways, a discussion about the weekly Torah portion that turned into a spirited debate about the Ten Commandments.

"The Torah says don't covet your neighbor's fields, and we're going to a Palestinian village whose private land has been confiscated for the sake of covetous Jews building settlements," Chesir-Teran said.

As their bus trundled through the terraced hills south of Hebron, students listened to a local activist's condensed history of the combustible West Bank, which Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

As part of interim peace deals in the 1990s, the West Bank was carved up into autonomous and semi-autonomous Palestinian areas, along with a section called Area C that remains under exclusive Israeli control.

The destinations of the day — the Palestinian villages of At-Tuwani and Ar-Rakkes — sit in Area C, also home to around 450,000 Israeli settlers. Palestinians seek all of the West Bank as the heartland of a hoped-for independent state.

The group was guided by villagers to their olive trees — an age-old Palestinian symbol and a more recent casualty of the struggle for land with Israeli settlers.



In this Friday, Jan. 25, 2019 photo, young American rabbinical student tour an olive grove that was vandalized by neighboring Israeli settlers, near the West Bank village of Attuwani, south of Hebron.

Associated Press

Israeli security officials reported a dramatic spike last year in settler violence against Palestinians.

Yishai Fleisher, a settler spokesman, blamed the attacks on the "atmosphere of tension" in the West Bank. "We're against vigilantism, unequivocally," he said.

As Israeli soldiers watched from the hilltop, Palestinians and Jews dug their fingers into the crumbling soil, setting down roots where holes torn out of the field hinted at recent vandalism. Dratch said he came of age in Pennsylvania during the violent years of the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s. "My religious education was steeped in fear of Palestinians," he said.

But in college, Dratch's ideas about Israel changed. Dratch says he still supports Israel, while opposing its policies in the West Bank. "I realized I could be Zionist without turning my back on my neighbor, on Palestinians," he said.

With hundreds of young American rabbis sharing such sentiments, some in Israel find the trend alarming. "I worry about a passion for social justice becoming co-opted by far-left politics among future American Jewish leaders," said Yossi Klein Halevi, a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, a Jewish research center in Jerusalem.

"Future rabbis are marginalizing themselves from the overwhelming majority of Israeli Jews," he added.

As Israel heads toward elections in April, opinion polls point to another victory for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his religious, nationalist allies.

In the U.S., meanwhile, surveys show American Jews, particularly the younger generation, holding far more dovish views toward Palestinians and religious pluralism. Netanyahu's close friendship with President Donald Trump has further alienated many American Jews, who tend to vote overwhelmingly Democratic. □